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A

# FINAL APPEAL

TO

# THE LITERARY PUBLIC,

RELATIVE TO

# POPE.

---

*Published separately, or as a Supplement to Bowles's Edition of Pope.*

(Bowles)
NADB

A

# FINAL APPEAL

TO

# THE LITERARY PUBLIC,

RELATIVE TO

# P O P E,

IN REPLY TO CERTAIN OBSERVATIONS OF MR. ROSCOE, IN HIS EDITION OF THAT POET'S WORKS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SOME REMARKS ON LORD BYRON'S CONVERSATIONS, AS FAR AS THEY RELATE TO THE SAME SUBJECT AND THE AUTHOR.

IN LETTERS TO A LITERARY FRIEND.

---

BY THE REV. WM. L. BOWLES, A.M.

PREBENDARY OF SARUM, FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE, AND FORMER EDITOR OF POPE'S WORKS IN TEN VOLUMES.

---

Refellere sine acrimonia, refelli, sine iracundia paratus.

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TO

GEORGE WATSON TAYLOR, Esq; M. P.

MY DEAR SIR,

*As you have in your library the Works of Pope lately edited by Mr. Roscoe; and as you first informed me that some opinions of mine, (deliberately formed and publicly maintained, on the character of that poet as a man, and on his rank in his art,) were again brought into discussion by Mr. Roscoe:—Unwilling that you should think those opinions rashly entertained, or hastily advanced, I have taken the liberty of dedicating the following pages to you, requesting your impartial attention to the arguments on the different points of discussion;*

*And I am, dear Sir,*

*Most faithfully yours,*

*W. L. BOWLES.*

*Bremhill, Jan.* 1, 1825.

## *TO THE READER.*

Deeming it an indispensable public duty to meet respectfully, but to combat fairly, any arguments brought against my conscientiously entertained and publicly professed moral sentiments, and critical opinions, in the edition of Pope's Works edited by me; I feel more particularly called upon so to do, when those sentiments and opinions are opposed by so accomplished a scholar as the Author of the Life of *Lorenzo de Medici.*

After so much discussion, I am indeed most reluctant to engage in any part of the subject again; but the circumstances connected with the publication of Pope's Letters have never yet been examined with the

attention which they deserve; and those circumstances constitute an important point, in a review of that poet's life and character.

With respect to the second topic of discussion, although it has been almost exhausted, yet Mr. Roscoe has advanced some *new*, and which probably appear to him incontrovertible, arguments, to prove that Pope was entitled to be placed, as a poet, in the same rank with "SPENSER and SHAKESPEARE." On this point we are at issue. Steadfast on the ground of my "Invariable "Principles of Poetry,"* I maintain that some subjects are *more adapted to the higher order* of poetry than others; that neither moral essays in verse, nor satires, are of this order; and that though the genius of a poet may render such subjects, in point of execution, *perfect* in their kind—no genius, no skill, can so exalt them as to entitle the author to be placed in the FIRST AND HIGHEST RANK in poetry, for reasons which will be more fully illustrated in the following pages.

* See Letter to Mr. Campbell.

Into this part of the subject, I hope I may be found to have introduced some variety, particularly in examining Mr. Roscoe's specific proofs, brought to oppose the grounds of my criticism; and I believe the answers will be considered as complete as those to Lord Byron.

There are a few personal observations, to which, for my own sake, it was necessary that some answer should be given. And I trust, that what I shall offer, in excuse for some trifling oversights, will meet with a candid reception from every ingenuous and manly mind.

Two observations of Mr. Roscoe I forgot to answer in their proper places. He most amiably enquires, "how is the conduct so "unjustly by me imputed to Pope, *reconcilable* "with the affecting lines on Martha Blount's "birth-day?" In return, will he inform us, how the most offensive licentiousness of language can be "*reconcilable*" with professed virtue and purity? He says, that from *one* letter of Pope I infer a wish, on his part, that Martha Blount should "throw off the

" restraint of her friends, and domesticate " with him." I answer, she did " *leave her* " *friends, and domesticate with him;*" and it is not likely she would have done this without encouragement.

It may be proper to add, that the Friend to whom these letters are addressed, and who furnished me with faithful extracts from Mr Roscoe's edition, is a gentleman equally respected for literature, talents, and character; but whose name, though it would confer a distinction on these pages, is withheld at his own request.

It will be observed, I have confined myself to answering those passages from Mr. Roscoe's edition of Pope, which have been thus copiously and faithfully set before me by this friend. But the reader is not to imagine, that I have not examined, with my own eyes, Mr. Roscoe's arguments, before I presumed to publish the answers; notwithstanding I had the fullest assurance of the fidelity with which they were extracted.

I must also add, that I procured Mr.

Dibdin's entertaining and interesting work, the Literary Companion, the moment its publication was notified to me as containing some observations on the subject.

Mr. Roscoe, I think, could have had no ground of complaint, if I had not examined his work myself, for his principal objections appear at full length, and *side by side, as it were,* with my answers. This circumstance has added considerably to the size and expense of my pamphlet; but it is, after all, the most fair way, and prevents the possibility of garbled statements; and if the smallest part of the same justice had been shewn to me, the public would have been spared at least this *seventh* pamphlet, and much elaborate but unsubstantial cavil.

If I have pursued a more direct and manly way, by giving my opponent every advantage of stating his objections at large, and in his own words, it is a proof, at least, that I have some reliance on the soundness of my cause.

One circumstance which I touch upon with reluctance—the clamour raised, on account of

my having spoken of a "mixture of licentious-
"ness" in the character of Pope's gallantry, has obliged me, in absolute self-defence, to set before the reader some passages, to which I before thought it best only to allude; but there are others no less necessary, perhaps, for this defence, which are such as no man, who has any regard to decency, could bring before the public in his own name, though written by him, who, according to Mr. Roscoe, was as innocent as "*le naif* "*Candide*" himself!*

What other cavils may be further brought forward, I know not. But the grounds of my criticism, I think, I shall have proved to be immovable: and having now, I hope, fully answered the more essential objections of the last Editor of Pope's works, I must leave the rest to TIME and TRUTH.

* Mr. Roscoe seems to wonder that I have not yet given up my opinion respecting the moral and poetical character of his favourite bard; the reason is, because I have never met with any substantial arguments, (though I have had plenty of abuse,) that might induce me to do so; and his own argument, I fear, will be found as ineffectual as any others which I have yet met with.

As I hope and trust, that this appeal will indeed be *final*, I have included answers to some objections which I had no opportunity of doing before; and I solicit the reader's indulgence for those remarks which I have ventured to make, in consequence of the recent publication of "Lord Byron's Conver- "sations," and of his general animadversions on some early poems of mine, which have been received with favour by the public.

*Jan. 5*, 1825.

# CONTENTS.


| LETTER | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | From the Rev. ——, of Bath, with Extracts from Mr. Roscoe's Edition of Pope | 1 |
| II. | Answer from the Author | 6 |
| III. | From the Rev. ——, containing further Extracts, chiefly relating to the Publication of Pope's Letters | 11 |
| IV. | Answer from the Author, on the Subject of Pope's Letters | 27 |
| V. | From the Rev. ——, of Bath, on the Subject of Mr. Dibdin's Library Companion | 57 |
| VI. | The Author in Reply, respecting Mr. Dibdin's Publication | 60 |
| VII. | From the Rev. ——, of Bath, with Extracts from Mr. Roscoe, animadverting on Mr. Bowles's Principles of Poetic Criticism; and contending for Pope's equal Rank in his Art with Spenser and Shakespeare | 67 |
| VIII. | The Author in Reply, on the persevering Misrepresentations of his Opponents | 73 |
| IX. | From the Rev. ——, of Bath, in Reply to the Author | 78 |
| X. | From the Author, containing a Review of Mr. Roscoe's Critical Principles | 79 |
| XI. | From the Same, containing an Answer to the specific Objects of Poetry, according to Mr. Roscoe's Scale | 90 |

LETTER Page

XII. From the Author, containing an Enumeration of different Compositions adduced by Mr. Roscoe, as Examples to prove that the particular Subject of his Muse is not to be considered in estimating the Rank of a Poet; with specific Answers relative to the Chessmen of Vida, the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, &c. &c. ..... 101

XIII. From the Author, on the Task, with a Character of, and Extracts from, Cowper ..... 115

XIV. From the Author, with Critical Remarks on the Compositions of Mr. Pope, with a View to estimate his Poetical Character, and Rank as a Writer .... 126

XV. From the Author, with Critical Opinions on the Odyssey ..... 135

XVI. From the Author, on Lord Byron's Conversations, and his Satire, 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.' ..... ..... ..... 143

Postscript, with Letter from Mr. Scott ..... 158

Appendix ..... 161

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## CORRIGENDA.

Page 18, The Note marked † is part of the *text* in Mr. Roscoe's edition.
78, for XI. read IX.
98, for *the* read *they*.
109, for Αγαμεμνον read Αγαμεμνων.
115, for *Transillo* read *Tansillo*.
142, insert, at the conclusion of the letter, *W. L. Bowles*.
157, for *now more* read *now no more*.

## LETTER I.

*Bath, Sept.* 10, 1824.

My Dear Sir,

You desired me to inform you, if I met with any thing remarkable, as alluding to yourself, in Mr. Roscoe's new edition of Pope's Works, just published. I have accordingly much pleasure in complying with your request; more especially so, as I am convinced of your readiness to meet any objections which may be made to sentiments which you have publicly advanced, no less than of your willingness to retract any opinions, which, after fair and honourable discussion, have been proved to you to be indefensible. The following observations I perceive in a note, pp. 198, 199, of Mr. Roscoe's Life of Pope: "From the "want of sufficient attention to the correspondence "between Pope and Lady Mary,* Mr. Bowles has "been led to advance a series of charges equally "unjust and injurious to the memory of both. In "a note on a letter from Pope to Lady Mary, given "in Mr. Bowles's edition of Pope without a date,

* Lady Mary Wortley Montague.

" (vol. vii. p. 215,) but dated in Mr. Dallaway's " edition of Lady Mary's Works, (vol. ii. p. 30,) " Aug. 18, 1716, Mr. Bowles informs us, " that " Pope has suppressed part of the letter, which may " be seen in Dallaway's edition; the grossness of " which will sufficiently explain Pope's meaning." " To which he adds, 'And I have little doubt but " that the lady, disdaining the stiff and formal mode " of female manners at that time prevalent, made " the *lover* believe he might proceed *a step far-* " *ther than decency would* allow;" thus inferring, " from the freedom presumed to be displayed by " Pope in his letter, that Lady Mary had encouraged " him in it, and placing his offence to her dis- " credit. When, however, we turn to the letter in " Mr. Dallaway's edition, we find no such inde- " cent passages; on the contrary, the only expres- " sions from the pen of Pope that can be said to " bear any construction of the kind are, in the " letter as published by Mr. Bowles, and the for- " mer editors of Pope, and are not found in Mr. " Dallaway's, printed from the original letter as " sent to Lady M.; from which it appears that " Pope did not address her in any terms that " might be considered as too familiar. Nor is " there any expression, even in the letter in Mr. " Bowles's edition, liable, on explanation, to any " sinister construction—the *nakedness* to which " Pope there alludes having a reference, not to the

"body, but the mind.* Yet Pope appears to have "felt that this passage was too equivocal for the "eye of a lady, and therefore omitted it in the "letter actually sent. It is, however, on such "grounds as these that Mr. Bowles has not only "founded his charge against Pope, but has endea- "voured to demonstrate that he corrected his letters "for Curll's surreptitious edition.—See the Cor- "respondence between Pope and Lady M., vol. ix. "pp. 8, 11, 25, in notes."

At page 11, vol. ix. in the notes to Pope's third letter to Lady M., in observation upon Mr. Bowles's note to the same, Mr. Roscoe remarks, "On the "above note it must be observed, that Lady M. was "not at Constantinople when this letter was written; "she had only just left England, and this was the "first letter addressed to her by Pope after her "departure. Pope has not suppressed *any thing in* "*this passage;* as may be seen by comparing the "two letters now given. What could be the "motive of Mr. Bowles for making so unfounded "an assertion, it is for him to explain. This "comparison† will also shew that there are *no*

* A disgusting equivoque, of which he was conscious. W. L. B.

† Viz. Of the copy of the letter as given by the Editors of Pope, from Pope's original draught, and the copy of Mr. Dallaway's edition from the letter actually sent to Lady M.

"*passages* in the letter, as published by Mr. Dal-
"laway, *more gross* than those in the other copy;
"whence it appears, that Pope did not 'proceed
"a step further than decorum would allow,' and,
"consequently, that the gross imputation thrown
"out by Mr. Bowles on Lady M., that she had
"made *the lover believe* he might do so, is as
"unfounded as it is injurious."

In another note to the Life, p. 227, in reference to Lady M. W. Montague and Mr. Pope, in which both Mr. Bowles and Mr. Gilchrist are quoted, Mr. Roscoe observes, "It must, indeed,
"be acknowledged, that the various publications
"of Mr. Bowles, in defence of his sentiments and
"conduct, as editor of Pope, have only served still
"more to discover the prejudice and dislike with
"which he regards his memory. Even in the
"sequel to his *Vindication*, Mr. B. is so far from
"having substantially disavowed his injurious
"imputations, that he has confirmed them in the
"strongest language. 'I beg to be understood,'
"says he, 'that that though I did not, as editor of
"Pope, accuse him of *the* GROSSEST *licentiousness*,
"but a mixture of licentiousness; I now, without
"fear, accuse him of the GROSSEST.'—(Vindica-
"tion, page 82.) Nor is the expression of his
"animosity confined to prose. In the same pub-
"lication we find some verses, addressed to his
"opponent, which thus commence:

" What, shall the dark reviler cry, ' O shame!'
" If one vile sland'rer is held up by name?
" Shall the rank, loathsome miscreant of the age
" Sit, like a night-mare, grinning on a page?
" Turn round his murky orbs, that roll in spite,
" And clench his fiendish claws in grim delight?
" And shall not an indignant flash of day
" Scare the voracious vampire from his prey?"*

" Are we to suppose that ' the *vile slanderer*, " *the loathsome miscreant of the age*,' is intended " to allude to Pope? and that ' *the indignant flash* " *of day*' was the publication of Mr. Bowles's " edition of his works?"

I have not yet inspected all the volumes of this new edition of Pope; but the quotations which I now send are the strongest passages, as bearing upon yourself, that I have hitherto found. I fancy they will require some notice from your ready pen.

" Haud tanto cessabis cardine rerum."

Believe me to be,

My dear Sir,

Your's most truly,

---

* Mr. Roscoe says nothing of the *provocation* for these lines. They were not intended for Pope, but for him who called *proceeding* " *a step beyond decorum*," " an attempt " to commit a rape!" who defended the vindictive and unmanly couplet, alluding to a woman Pope once loved; and who, in coarse abuse, outraged all the courtesies of literature towards myself.

## LETTER II.

*Bremhill, Sept.* 12, 1824.

MY DEAR SIR,

ACCORDING to Mr. Roscoe, I find, alas, I am "unjust," not only to Pope, but to poor Lady Mary, the lady of whom the vindictive poet wrote,

> "From furious Sappho, scarce a milder fate,
> "——— by her *love*, and libell'd by her *hate!*"

*Dii boni!* this is a WICKEDNESS I hardly expected to be charged with by those who might think such verses not at all unjust or unmanly!!

2d. I have charged Pope with writing a gross passage, which is not found in the letter to which the reader was directed!

*Habes confitentem!* the cause will be explained.

3d. I have written personally satirical lines, (which Pope of course never did!) and which this *naif* new editor, who smells treason in every thing of mine to the king of his idolatry, applies to Pope!!

But it becomes us to hold up our hands, and plead under such weighty charges. And first of Pope's quarrel with his heart's early idol.

When I spoke of the origin of this quarrel, I offered my ideas merely *as conjecture*, ("This, however, must be *all conjecture*."—Vol. viii. page 426, Bowles's Pope.)

Whatever, then, the origin might have been, my ideas of it were given merely as "conjecture." I alluded to his general indecent language in his letters to Lady Mary when abroad; and I merely *conjectured*, that, after her return, this accomplished lady's manners being *less formal* than those of the prudes of the day, might have induced him *to believe* that he was a particularly favoured admirer; and that under this belief he might have presumed, during the "mollia tempora fandi," to have solicited that mark of female favour, to which Lord Byron says,* "I made the woods of Madeira tremble!"—in plain language, a kiss; and that the lady might have "*repulsed*" the disappointed Bard, on his nearer approach, with some symptoms of resentment!! This is all the "*conjecture*" that entered into my simple pericranium; which was afterwards turned into "*an attempt to commit a rape!*"

I have thus stated the plain fact; but the offence, to a mind constituted like that of Pope, might have been not the less inexpiable. And, moreover, so far from accusing either "unjustly," (if such a circumstance be an accusation,) I expressly

* English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.

said, "this must be all *conjecture*."—Vol. vii. This *conjecture* conveys no great reflection on either. It is the unmanly and vindictive spirit which Pope afterwards manifested, which disgraces him.

But this is really so unimportant, that I should have deemed it utterly unworthy of notice, if Mr. Roscoe had not thought it necessary again to revive the subject, with pointed reference to a late literary antagonist of mine; of whom he speaks with respect, but whose vindication of Pope should rather be called "the abuse of Bowles."

I now proceed to examine what Mr. Roscoe has said respecting the clandestine publication of the letters. Mr. Roscoe observes, "Mr. Bowles has "endeavoured to demonstrate that he (Pope) "corrected his letters for *Curll's edition!!*"

Mr. Bowles quoted the *original letters*, and he quoted the *same letters* as they stand *altered* in Pope's and Curll's surreptitious edition of Pope's Letters; and he asks, and he thinks this is demonstration, who *altered the expressions?* and leaves the inference to every reader. For instance,

*Original Letter.*—"I can say little to recommend the letters *I am* going to write."

*Pope's own edition, and Curll's.*—"I can say little to recommend the letters *I shall* write," (leaving out "*am going to* write,") and so on.

Who could have made this and other corrections but Pope? for surely he would not *adopt* Curll's.

Pope and Curll, then, were and *must* be the same.

This, in my opinion, is demonstration, not "*endeavouring*" to demonstrate, as Mr. Roscoe affirms.

In reference to the last point, I am sorry to say I have been guilty of an *oversight*, and this was occasioned by inadvertently mistaking one of Pope's letters for another. I concede, therefore, that what Mr. Roscoe says is just, as to there not being a *suppression* of any gross passage in the particular letter to which I referred. If the oversight had ever been pointed out, I should instantly have acknowledged it, with every expression of regret, that, in my haste, I had made the mistake. That it was owing to *mistake*, and not to deliberate intention, none who know me will doubt; others must judge as they please. If I could have done this deliberately, it must certainly have been found out, for I myself pointed out that letter in which I presumed the passage was. The fact is as follows.

In reading Lady Mary's letters, I came to the following passage, in a letter from Pope to her Ladyship, in the same volume; "I foresee, the further "you go from me, the more *freely* I shall write; "and if (as I *earnestly* wish) you would do the "same, I can't guess where it will end. Let us "be like *modest* people, who, when they are close "together, keep all *decorums*; but if they step a

"little aside, or get to the other end of a room, "can *untie garters*, or TAKE OFF SHIFTS, without "scruple."*

I inadvertently alluded to (without looking at the beginning) this piece of "decorum," to a gentleman's new-married wife, as belonging to the letter, beginning with, "I can say little," &c. This inadvertence has been the cause of Mr. Roscoe's observations. When the fact is stated, I think the *mistake* will be obvious; but the passage which I have now given—and many, many others of a similar kind might be quoted—neither Mr. Roscoe, nor all Pope's friends, can *put out;* which justify me *substantially* in the allegations which I have made, and which will prove the want of "decorum," as well as of decency, in the bard of Twickenham, as long as his name, and that of Lady M. W. Montague are mentioned together.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Your obliged,

W. L. BOWLES.

* I shall hereafter enter into a more particular enquiry respecting the mysterious publication of Pope's Letters.

## LETTER III.

*Bath, Sept.* 17, 1824.

MY DEAR SIR,

. . . With this note you will receive more extracts from Mr. Roscoe's Life of Pope; which, together with those already forwarded to you at your request, constitute, I believe, the principal part of his animadversions upon what you have written upon the same subject.

For my own part, I think Mr. Pope vulnerable chiefly on the score of his correspondence with Lady M. W. Montague; in which he seems to have entirely lost himself, and to have forgotten, for the time, *his moral* principles. His conduct, in this respect, can never, in my opinion, be vindicated. Besides the very objectionable passage quoted in your letter, there are several others in the same correspondence that might be pointed out, which are equally indecorous, or even more so. The general strain, indeed, of these letters is so exceedingly incorrect, that it is wonderful how

even a married woman like Lady M. W. M. should have suffered him, after the first specimen of his style, to continue a correspondence in terms so unbecoming. Would that they had never appeared in print! or that, like Lord Byron's Life of himself, they had met with some kind friend to consign them to the flames.

Without farther preamble, therefore, I shall now proceed with my extracts from Mr. Roscoe.

*P.* 416, *vol. i.* On "the Epistle on the Characters of Women," Mr. Roscoe observes, "the "propensity manifested by the later editors of Pope "to charge him with being abusive, ungrateful, "and unprincipled, is no where more apparent "than in their annotations on this epistle, as a "few instances may sufficiently shew. On the cha-"racter of Philomedè, (v. 70,) Dr. Warton informs "us, that 'this was designed for the Duchess "of Marlborough, who so much admired Congreve, "and after his death caused a figure in wax-work "to be made of him, and placed frequently at her "table. This connexion,' says he, 'is parti-"cularly hinted at in v. 76.'

"She sins with poets," &c.

'Our author's declaration, therefore, *that no 'particular character was aimed at, was not true.*'" "To which accusation Mr. Bowles re-echoes, 'for

" the want of delicacy, the coarseness and vulgarity " of these lines, no wit can atone.' But what will " be said, when it appears that the characters of " Philomedè, Chloe, and Atossa, the only ones " which have ever been supposed to apply to par- " ticular individuals, and on the first of which " Dr. Warton has founded so direct a charge of " falsehood against Pope, were not included in the " *early* editions of this epistle, to which the decla- " ratory advertisement was affixed; and that such " advertisement was omitted after those characters " were inserted." ——

*P.* 418, *ibid.* " Yet more injurious to the memory " of the poet is the story, related by Warton, of " the transactions that occurred between him and " the Duchess of Marlborough, with respect to the " character of Atossa. ' These lines,' says he, ' were " shewn to her Grace, as if they were intended for " the portrait of the Duchess of Buckingham; but " she soon stopped the person who was reading " them to her, *as the Duchess of Portland in-* " *formed me*, and calling out aloud, ' I cannot be " so imposed upon; I see plainly enough for whom " they are designed;' and abused Pope most plen- " tifully on the subject; though she was afterwards " reconciled to him, and courted him, *and gave* " *him a thousand pounds to suppress this por-* " *trait;* which he accepted, it is said, by the " persuasion of Mrs. M. Blount; and, *after the*

" *Duchess's death*, it was printed in a folio sheet;
" 1746,* and *afterwards* here inserted with those
" of Philomedè and Chloe. *This is the greatest*
" *blemish in our poet's moral character.*† On
" which Mr. Bowles exclaims, 'A blemish! call it
" rather, *if it be fact*, the most shameful dereliction
" of every thing that was manly and honourable.'
" If Mr. Bowles did not mean that it should be
" taken as a fact, why did he think it necessary to
" characterize it by these expressions? Yet in his
" Life of Pope, (p. 101,) he has himself allowed,
" that a story *so base* ought not, *for a moment*,
" to be admitted on the evidence of Walpole, (who
" has related it;) and in his *Vindication*, he indig-
" nantly disavows his ever having charged Pope
" with such an offence."‡

*Page 444, ibid.* " There are, however, few
" incidents of his (Pope's) life which have been
" more injurious to his character, or that have
" been rendered the subject of greater censure upon
" him, than the measures supposed to have been
" adopted by him, in order to protect himself
" against the charge of vanity and presumption in

* " Pope had then been dead two years."

† " Warton's note on Moral Essays, Ep. II. v. 120."

‡ I say the same still, and see no contradiction whatever! If the story was true, it was infamous; but we should not receive it on the authority of Walpole, and, for myself, I indignantly reject it. Where is the inconsistency? W. L. B.

" publishing his own letters. That Pope, like " every person of good sense and delicacy, might " feel a reluctance in bringing before the public " writings of this nature, the depositories, for a " long series of years, of the private opinions and " sentiments of himself and his friends, may readily " be conceived; but that he would, merely for the " purpose of obtaining a colourable pretext in the " eye of the world for such a measure, have re- " sorted to a course of conduct, as contemptible " for its weakness, as it would be detestable for " its falsehood and its treachery, is a proposition " not so readily to be believed. Yet upon this " idea, the more recent editors of the works of " Pope have founded a series of charges against " him, which, being repeated from one to another " for the space of half a century, have tended to " degrade him in the eyes of the public, and ma- " terially to diminish the influence which his " writings are otherwise calculated to produce. " In seriously maintaining this accusation, Dr. " Johnson seems to have taken the principal part; " and as his account of the transaction has been " adopted without hesitation by the subsequent " biographers of Pope, it may here be proper to " lay it before the reader.

' One of the passages of Pope's life, which seems ' to deserve some enquiry, was a publication of ' letters between him and many of his friends,

'which, falling into the hands of Curll, a rapa-
'cious bookseller, of no good fame, were by
'him printed and sold. This volume containing
'some letters from noblemen, Pope incited a
'prosecution against him in the House of Lords
'for breach of privilege, and attended himself to
'stimulate the resentment of his friends. Curll
'appeared at the bar, and knowing himself in no
'great danger, spoke of Pope with very little re-
'verence; he has, says Curll, a knack at versifying,
'but in prose I think myself a match for him.
'When the orders of the House were examined,
'none of them appeared to have been infringed;
'Curll went away triumphant; and Pope was left
'to seek some other remedy.

'Curll's account was, that one evening a man,
'in a clergyman's gown, but with a lawyer's band,
'brought and offered to sale a number of printed
'volumes, which he found to be Pope's Epistolary
'Correspondence; that he asked no name, and
'was told none, but gave the price demanded, and
'thought himself authorised to use his purchase
'to his own advantage.

'That Curll gave a true account of the trans-
'action; it is reasonable to believe, because no
'falsehood was ever detected; and when some
'years afterwards I mentioned it to Lintot, the
'son of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be,
'that Pope knew better than any body else how

'Curll obtained the copies, because another parcel 'was at the same time sent to himself, for which 'no price had ever been demanded, as he made 'known his resolution not to pay a porter, and 'consequently not to deal with a nameless agent.

'Such care had been taken to make them public, 'that they were sent at once to two booksellers; 'to Curll, who was likely to seize them as a prey; 'and to Lintot, who might be expected to give 'Pope information of the seeming injury. Lintot, 'I believe, did nothing, and Curll did what was 'expected. That to make them public was the 'only purpose, may be reasonably supposed, be-'cause the numbers offered to sale by the private 'messengers shewed, that hope of gain could not 'have been the motive of the impression.

'It seems that Pope, being desirous of printing 'his letters, and not knowing how to do, without 'the imputation of vanity, what has in this country 'been done very rarely, contrived an appearance 'of compulsion; that when he could complain that 'his letters were surreptitiously published, he might 'decently and defensively publish them himself.'*

"This strange tissue of gross mistakes and "groundless imputations, has been adopted by "Dr. Warton in his life of Pope, in the same "words, without farther examination; and Mr. "Bowles has not only given it his full sanction,

* Life of Pope, by Dr. Johnson.

" but has endeavoured to confirm it by various " arguments; and in particular by a supposed dis- " covery, that 'almost all the letters in the " collection, which Pope calls the spurious ones, " were carefully corrected and amended.' 'That " he did it himself,' adds Mr. Bowles, 'appears " from the letters afterwards printed in his own " name in 1735,* having retained all the cor- " rections, amendments, and additions which he " had carefully inserted in the spurious edition.' " This misrepresentation has before been noticed; " but it may here be proper to remark, that the " supposed correction of these letters by Pope is a " groundless assumption.† Yet upon these grounds " Mr. Bowles had ventured to assert, that 'the " art and hypocrisy with which the whole stra- " tagem was carried on, could only be equalled by " the consummate assurance of appealing to the

* "Pope printed no letters in his own name in 1735. It " was not till 1737 that the authentic edition of his letters " was published." *R.*

Certainly. There is a mistake of figures. W. L. B.

† "The reason of the variation between the copies as " published by the editors of the works of Pope, and those " of Lady Mary, being, that the former were *published from* " *the draft or sketch* as retained *by Pope*, and the latter " from the corrected copy, as actually sent by him to Lady " Mary; between which such diversities occasionally exist, " as may be supposed to have arisen in the transcription." *R.*

" House of Lords, instigating them to punish the " dupe who was his instrument.' "*

*Roscoe's Life of Pope, p. 457, note.*—" In Mr. " Bowles's introductory note to the correspondence " of Pope, (vide Bowles's edition, vol. vii. p. 3,) he " says, ' *In the Appendix to this volume will be " seen the statement of the transaction as first " published, when the unauthorised edition came " out, that the reader may form his opinion.*' " When, however, we turn to examine this im- " portant document, which extends to many pages, " Mr. Bowles, after giving only a single page, " observes, ' *it would be trifling with the reader's " patience to carry him through the whole of the " correspondence: but the following letter is too " singular to be omitted.*' The narrative of Pope " is, therefore, from thenceforth abandoned; and " *three* letters only are inserted in its stead. This " conduct of Mr. Bowles has called down upon " him the severe animadversion of Mr. Gilchrist; " who, in his *Third Letter to Mr. Bowles*, p. 44, " asks, ' Now, Sir, is this statement, *as first pub- " lished*, to be found in the Appendix, as you have " affirmed? Is as much of it given as will enable " any reader to form an opinion of the nature of " the transaction? And is it a seemly supplement " to your affected abhorrence of duplicity and dis- " ingenuousness, that you have only given such

* Bowles's Life of Pope, p. 96.

"*extracts from this narrative*, as may serve to "confirm Dr. Johnson's suspicion?' (Vide Bowles's "Pope, vol. vii. p. 426.) It does not, however, "appear, that even Mr. Gilchrist himself was "aware of the *extent* to which the injustice to "Pope has been carried by his last editor; as it "consists not merely in *withholding* the narrative "which he had promised to lay before the reader, "but in *substituting* for the part so omitted *other* "pieces *not found in the original;* the *two first* "of the *three* letters given by Mr. Bowles, which "appear to the reader as documents adduced by "Pope, being, in fact, extracted from the *counter-* "*narrative* of Curll. That this has been done by "Mr. Bowles with an intent to injure the character "of Pope, I do not believe; but whether done "*intentionally* or *inadvertently*, the effect, with "regard to Pope, is the same; and it would be a "dereliction of the duty I have undertaken, not "to state the fact; which is irrefragably proved, by "comparing the *narrative* of Pope, as published in "Mr. Bowles's edition, with the same as *originally* "*published*, and as reprinted in the appendix to "the present volume."

*Roscoe's Life of Pope, p.* 468.—"Johnson, "and the subsequent editors of Pope, have been "obliged to resort to another motive, and to sup- "pose that he had recourse to these underhand "measures, in order to avoid the imputation of

"*vanity* in publishing his own correspondence! "But although he might feel some reluctance on "this head, as is, perhaps, rendered probable by "his postponing it to so late a period of his life, "yet that he should for that purpose engage "in an intricate and infamous plot to impose "upon the public; should counterfeit letters; per- "sonate characters; solemnly disavow, in repeated "advertisements, his own acts, and intrust his "honour and reputation to the mercy of low and "dangerous associates; and all this for no other "purpose than to commit the publication of his "letters to one of the most profligate of his pro- "fession, whom he had for a long course of years "held up to public ridicule; whose offers of recon- "ciliation he had always treated with disdain; and "of whom he never ceased to express his detesta- "tion and contempt, to the close of his life; is a "supposition so far beyond the range of all reason- "able probability, as to require only to be stated, "in order to obtain for it the degree of estimation "it deserves."

*Page 577, Roscoe's Life, &c.*—"The filial "affection of Pope, manifested through a long series "of dutiful attention, is universally allowed, and "forms one of the finest features of his character; "nor was he less distinguished by the warmth and "sincerity of his friendships, from which he "derived a great portion of the happiness of his

"life. These attachments appear to have been "indiscriminately formed with persons of either "sex; a circumstance, which has given occasion to "charge him with having indulged a licentious "passion under the mask of virtue and friendship. "That he was highly gratified by the favour and "society of elegant and accomplished women, is "indisputable; and that his regard for them was "heightened by that indescribable charm which "always attends a disinterested friendship between "persons of different sexes, may also be allowed; "but further than this he appears to have had no "pretensions. He could admire, and he could "esteem; but it may be doubted whether he was "susceptible of that passion which colours every "sentiment, influences every action, and absorbs "every other feeling, whenever it has once ob-"tained the ascendancy. Of any traits of this "kind his works afford few indications. No "writer on general subjects has produced so small "a number of amatory poems. The Epistle of "Eloisa to Abelard is, in fact, the work of a poet, "not of a lover; a description of the feelings of "another, not of his own; intended to obtain "applause, not a return of passion; the offspring "of imagination, not of the heart. It was, pro-"bably, from the result of this characteristic tem-"perament, no less than from his infirm constitu-"tion and defective figure, that he seems never to

"have had an idea of entering into the matrimo-
"nial state.

"Attempts have, however, been made to im-
"press the public with the idea that the connexion
"which subsisted for so many years between Pope
"and Martha Blount was of a criminal nature.
"'Many facts,' says his last editor, 'tend to prove
"the peculiar susceptibility of his passions; nor
"can we implicitly believe that the connexion
"between him and Martha Blount was of a nature
"so *pure* and innocent, as his panegyrist, Ruff-
"head, would make us believe. But whatever
"there might be of criminality in the connexion,
"it did not take place till the *hey-day* of youth
"was over; that is, after the death of her brother,
"(1726,) when he was *thirty-eight, and she*
"*thirty-six.*'* On this it may be observed, that
"if the connexion was not pure and innocent, it
"was disgraceful and guilty; and that, if this was
"the case, the circumstance so strangely alluded
"to above, is surely no alleviation of their miscon-
"duct. So far was Pope from entertaining any dis-
"honourable views with respect to Miss Blount, that
"he was most earnestly desirous to see her placed
"in a situation suitable to her rank and her
"merits. This is delicately referred to in several
"passages in his letters, which have been consi-

* "Bowles's Observations on the Character of Pope,
"in his edition of his Works, vol. i. page 128.

"dered as intentionally mysterious, and concealing "some criminal meaning.* The following pas- "sage in one of his last letters† is however "too explicit, on this point, to admit of any mis- "representation. 'Would to God you would "quicken your haste to *settle*, by reflecting what "a pleasure it would be to me just *to see it*, and "to see you at ease; and then I could contentedly "*leave you* to the providence of God in this "life, *and resign myself to it in the other*.' How "is the misconduct, so unjustly imputed to Pope, "reconcileable with the following lines, in an "epistle to this lady on her birth-day?

'Let joy or ease, let affluence or content,
'And the *gay conscience of a life well spent*,
'Calm ev'ry thought, inspirit ev'ry grace,
'Glow in thy heart, and smile upon thy face;
'Let day improve on day, and year on year,
'Without a pain, a trouble, or a fear;
'Till death unfelt that tender frame destroy
'In some soft dream, or ecstacy of joy;
'Peaceful sleep out the sabbath of the tomb,
'And wake to raptures in a life to come!'

* "See, particularly, Letters to Martha and Teresa "Blount, No. 46, vol. viii. page 467; No. 49, page 475; "No. 51, p. 479, &c. On letter 49, in which Pope advises "Martha Blount to change her residence, and try to live "independent for two or three months, Mr. Bowles ob- "serves, 'this obscure letter seems to imply a wish that "she would *throw off the restraints of her family*, &c. and "live with him."

† "Vide Letter 60, vol. viii. p. 506."

"After these explanations, we may perhaps be "allowed to conclude, that the intimacy which sub- "sisted between Pope and Miss Blount, which has "been characterized as 'an *indefinite connexion*, "a strange mixture of *passion*, *gallantry*, *licen- "tiousness*, and *kindness*,' was nothing more than "a sincere and affectionate friendship, begun in "early youth, and continuing with a mutual in- "crease of esteem and attachment throughout "life. Of all the friends of Pope, she was incom- "parably the dearest to him. In moments of af- "fliction, she was the first person that occurred to "his thoughts; and her happiness was to him a "continual object of the most earnest solicitude. "She adopted all his connections and friendships; "and was esteemed and treated by all his noble and "accomplished visiters and correspondents as a "person of unimpeachable honour, respectable "family, and eminent good sense. With several "of them she corresponded on terms of friendship "and familiarity; and letters from her to Mrs. "Nugent and Dr. Swift appear in the collection. "Even after the death of Pope, she maintained "an intercourse with persons of the highest cha- "racter, rank, and fashion; with the Duchess of "Queensbury, Lady Temple, Lady Gerard, Mrs. "Price, and others; and it was not till our days, "that an attempt has been made to defame the "memory of an elegant and accomplished woman,

" who passed through life honoured and respected;
" and who was distinguished by the invariable
" esteem and friendship of a man, who, in spite of
" her detractors, has rendered her name as im-
" mortal as his own."

Perhaps I may have already fatigued your attention, as I have my own hand, by transcribing these extracts. Whatever may be your opinion of Mr. Pope and Miss Martha Blount, I trust that you will believe me to be,

Dear Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

## LETTER IV.

*Bremhill, Sept.* 1824.

My dear Sir,

I am infinitely obliged to you for the trouble you have taken.

As to the extracts which you send, Mr. Roscoe does not bear harder on me than he ought to do, supposing I had *designed* to disparage Pope. But I certainly had no *such design*, for I only spoke to points of his character, which appeared to me, from motives of truth, to call for animadversion in a review of his life.

That "Atossa" was not in the first edition, in which Pope says, "upon my honour, no characters were taken from life," I admit to be true: this circumstance *affects* me as inadvertent; but no one can suppose I asserted it *intentionally*, since it must be discovered. In so long and irksome a work such inadvertencies may be pardoned. I should have corrected it myself, had I been consulted.

But before I reply to those parts of Mr. Roscoe's observations which more immediately affect myself, I shall be more particular in speaking of the letters, and the stratagem employed to publish them, which Mr. Roscoe totally discredits, as unworthy of Pope. Mr. Roscoe says, "the vari-"ations in the letters were owing to *diversities* "only in the *transcription!!!*" Will this bear discussion? Who was so painfully correct as Pope? and would he adopt any corrections, though but of words, from the spurious edition, unless the spurious edition was his own? The *spurious* edition was published in 1735. *This edition and Pope's* agree to a word, and both disagree with the original letters sent to Lady Mary. My opinion, so far from being altered, is strengthened by Mr. Roscoe's saying only vaguely, "the "variation was owing to *transcribing!!*" Who transcribed them first? Their originals were furnished to Curll without Pope's concurrence, or they were with it. Then who altered the originals? Pope, or Curll? and if Curll, why did Pope adopt all the variations *verbatim et literatim?* Will Mr. Roscoe's argument prove any thing to the satisfaction of a single person, who gives the subject consideration?

Let the reader bear in mind another plain fact. The first letters were published in consequence of the distress of Mrs. Thomas, who sold them.

But how came the larger collection, which, we are told, was surreptitiously obtained, to be published? In consequence of the first publication Pope "RECALLED" all the letters which he had written to different correspondents, because, as he declared, "there were so many of which he never "KEPT COPIES!" The letters were "*recalled*," that he himself might publish a corrected collection, in case those letters to different correspondents should be again, without his authority, obtained from those to whom they were addressed, and get into print.

Can Mr. Roscoe deny this statement; and if so, whence did this second surreptitious collection come?—from those to whom the letters were sent? No! that is impossible; because the letters printed are not the same as the letters sent; and Pope professedly recalled them, having, out of so many "NEVER kept a copy!"

Now, then, account for most of the letters being published not as they were originally written, but with those alterations which Pope subsequently adopted, and in the precise form, and in the very words, in which they now appear.

Let the reader recollect another singular fact. In the surreptitious edition, and in Pope's authentic edition, the names of the ladies to whom the letters were addressed are all CONCEALED! It is

only known that letter xx.* was addressed to Lady Mary by its being printed in her works. Is it possible, that if the letter had been furnished by the hand of any one who had gained access to the original, no name would have been found?

It may be a fault in my understanding; but, notwithstanding Mr. Roscoe's defence, the proof appears to me now as it did before, irrefragable. The corrections are minute, and all to a letter adopted by Pope; and this very minuteness proves his connexion with the stratagem.

Let the reader compare not only the passage before quoted, "I shall write to you," corrected from "I am *beginning* to write to you," &c. but the following,—

"After his picture was *once* drawn:" in the surreptitious edition of 1735, and in Pope's own, 1737, "once" is omitted.

"*As somebody calls it, of talking upon paper,*" omitted in surreptitious edition, and in Pope's.

"Spoiled me for a solitaire *too.*" "*Too*" omitted, doubtless as an inelegant expletive, in both editions.

But a still stronger proof, in my opinion, (others will judge for themselves,) is the careful suppression, both in the edition of the surreptitious letters, and in Pope's acknowledged one, of the whole

* Warburton's common edition, vol. v. p. 143.

conclusion of this letter.* The original conclusion may be seen in Dallaway's edition. The surreptitious edition, and Pope's, end at "*elsewhere.*"†

I confess all this appears to me decisive. The alterations and omissions, to an iota, are the same in one copy as the other. The conclusion of the letter was obviously suppressed from its personality; and if the letter was printed from Lady Mary's copy, neither the name could have been concealed, the *verbal corrections adopted*, nor the *conclusion*, for particular reasons, suppressed; in all these things, the surreptitious and authentic being the same. Were the letters to Lady Mary those of which Pope never kept any copies?

Pope, indeed, in one of his letters to Lady Mary, speaks of having some thoughts "of causing what "he writes to be transcribed, and so to send copies "more ways than one."

But if this were so, could there be found *such variations?* such entire suppressions? Nor does he ever speak as if the letters clandestinely published were in any way procured from copies made by himself, but obtained, somehow or other, from copies from his correspondents; and therefore from these correspondents he recalled all that he could, for his own authentic edition in 1737. Then, *unde et quò*, the suppressions, and alterations, and minute

* The 20th.

† See Warburton's edition, vol. v. p. 143.

corrections? From himself. And whence could the letters surreptitiously printed, with the same suppressions and corrections to a syllable, come? From himself. And *how* came the dates and names to be all suppressed? Because no one would have done it but himself. If he himself was concerned, the whole has a clear solution; if he was not, the coincidence is miraculous. *Utrum horum mavis, accipe.* I have not "*re-echoed*" Dr. Johnson's opinion, but confirmed it; and I think that Mr. Roscoe neither has shaken, nor can shake it.

I shall only further observe, that Mr. Roscoe says, I charge Pope with "*adopting*" the corrections of Curll! I said, "Pope must have corrected the let-"ters himself, or adopted Curll's;" and as I never thought he adopted Curll's, so I thought, and do think, notwithstanding this defence, that both copies being the same to a tittle, both different from the originals, they were corrected by himself; that the surreptitious and the authentic edition owed their origin to the same person; and, therefore, however revolting it may appear, no other conclusion can I come to, but that Pope was the father of the whole plot.

So far from being convinced by Mr. Roscoe's arguments, or even thinking them plausible, I believe that the more the subject is examined, the more firmly my reasonings upon it will be established. Dr. Johnson spoke, apparently, according to the

general tradition, in times not far distant from those of Pope. With respect to the charge of intentional deception, in suppressing part of the Appendix relating to the transaction, this I peremptorily deny; though there may have been those, who have stigmatized me as *designing and hypocritical!!* So far from not publishing the whole account, as it stands in the surreptitious edition, because I thought that what was omitted would be in favour of Pope! I utterly disavow the foul imputation. I had no such motives or thoughts, as I think will be proved in what I shall add on the subject. At present, more convinced than ever of Pope's duplicity, by those very arguments that have been adduced to exonerate him, I retract not a syllable of the disdain which such duplicity deserved; and I believe the fact alone, to which I have alluded, independently of all other considerations, must prove that the author of the Preface to the authentic edition was the author of the surreptitious edition. Let the reader judge of this one fact.

In his own name, he says, (*Preface to the edition of* 1737,) "the rest he spared, as they preserved "the memory of some friendships which will be "ever dear to him, or set in a true light some "matters of fact, from which the scribblers of the "time have taken occasion to asperse him and his "friends." Now the Appendix to the surreptitious

edition, part of which I published, has these words: "Some of his friends advised him to print a col- "lection, to prevent worse; but this he would "*by no means agree to. However, as some of* "*the letters served to revive past scenes of friend-* "*ship, and others to clear the truth of facts,* in "which he had been misrepresented by the com- "mon scribblers, he was induced to preserve a few "of his own letters, as well as his friends."*

As to Curll, whom he so much despised, having the offer of them, it must be remembered that an offer was at the same time made to Lintot. Another remarkable circumstance appears from Dr. Johnson, that gain could not be the object; and being published by Curll, the real author would less be suspected. Curll published the *first letters*; purchased from Corinna; and therefore the most obvious plan would be that of Curll's publishing the others, "*auctore latitante.*" The whole series of deception must stand or fall together. Another reason why Curll might be fixed on, was, that he himself had "advertised that *any thing* which *any* "*body* would send as Mr. Pope's or Dr. Swift's "should be printed and inserted as theirs."

This was in 1734: the spurious edition appeared next year.

* Letters of Mr. Pope, 1735, printed and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster.

Further, one letter to Miss Blount is absolutely re-written and *compounded;* with a newly-composed beginning, two letters being tacked together; and this letter, so carefully and elaborately compounded, is found, *totidem verbis*, in the surreptitious edition, and in Pope's own. Who did, who could have done, this, but Pope himself? All the *latter part* of letter the 9th, in the surreptitious edition, is found word for word in an original letter to Martha Blount, from Bath, dated October the 6th.

This *original* letter is printed entire in the tenth volume of my edition, page 43. There are two pages in the letter before the following passage occurs: "I must tell you the truth, which, how-"ever, is not much to my credit. I never thought "so much of yourself and your sister, as I have since "I have been fourscore miles from you."

The whole of the *latter* part of this letter, from the above passage, is found in *another* letter, which has a *totally different* commencement in the surreptitious edition of 1735, (letter 9th,) and in Pope's own, letter 8th.

The eighth letter in Pope's own is the same as letter *ninth* in the surreptitious edition; one letter, grossly indelicate, being left out in Pope's own.

Now mark! All the *latter part* of the letter, dated Bath, October the 6th, from the passage,

"*I must tell you,*" &c. in *both* editions, surreptitious and authentic, is found, not where it appears in the *original*, which I have printed, but tacked on to a letter which begins, "If you ask me how "the waters agree," &c. This letter may be seen by turning to Warburton's common edition, letter 8th, page 120. Now the *original* in which it is found begins thus, "*Madam, if I ever may* "*be allowed.*"* Such an elaborate manufacture of a letter, as it stands in *Pope's own*, and in the *surreptitious edition*, with the *tail* of one letter tacked to the *head* of another, may be accounted for, as the ingenuous Mr. Roscoe thinks, by little accidental "*diversities occasioned by transcrip-* "*tion!*" Diversities indeed! It is impossible.

Let us carefully examine the next fact. In consequence of his "recalling" his letters, the revised collection had been deposited at Lord Oxford's, ready to start in case another unauthorised publication should call for them. The letters now might have been *transcribed* with all the subsequent *variations*, which must have been impossible before; because, if the *original letters* had been copied as they were received by the post, the *copies* could not have *varied* from the *originals*. Now, then, let us bring to the test of examination that simple act of "*transcribing*," to which Mr. Roscoe's more amiable credulity, or uncalculating

* Bowles's Pope, vol. x. p. 43.

ardour of defence, attributes so easily all these coincidences.

How stands the case? Let us endeavour, for clearness, to sum up a little. I will say nothing of Pope's general character for "stratagem," of the stratagem so successfully put in execution respecting the Criticism on Phillips's Pastorals; but confine myself to such facts as are manifest.

First, his letters are sold by a needy woman, his early acquaintance; and therefore, to guard in future against his private correspondence being divulged, he "recalls" all his letters from those to whom they had been sent. He finds the "number "very large; burns a considerable part; but pre- "serves some, that true and correct copies may be "presented to the world, from himself," in case a wicked bookseller should clandestinely obtain imperfect copies, and print them in their mutilated state.

I think this is the substance of the reasons which he gives for "recalling" the letters, and preserving them in a collection. This collection was very voluminous, containing the letters from Swift, Gay, &c. and various correspondents for many years.

We will now suppose them all safe, arranged, and deposited for greater care with Lord Oxford.

"Inclusam Danaem turris ahenea!!" and yet all the birds on a sudden are flown, and when they get out, they shew how carefully they have been treated in their confinement.

The letters, as we have seen, are most painfully corrected. Those to Lady Mary, so much so, as even to the leaving out a superfluous "too," or redundant "quite."* He could not *recall her* letters, and therefore we will suppose that, having kept "copies," or "drafts," as Mr. Roscoe calls them, he carefully revised them, leaving out those things which his cooler conscience told him were shameful *equivocations*. He revised in the same manner all the other letters, even to the compounding and manufacturing of *one* out of another, as we have seen in the letter to Martha Blount. The letters, being thus re-manufactured, might now come handsomely before the public, if any one should be so villanous as to purloin mutilated copies, and sell them to profligate booksellers!! All happened just as was expected. Plague on that profligate and sordid Curll! But how did the letters get out of their fastnesses, kept in such inviolable sanctity, and only ready to migrate in case any one, by artful means, should get copies *unfairly?*

How did they get out, all trim and adorned as they were? corrected to a *tittle*, as we have indubitable evidence. Were they all stolen? I do not remember that Pope says this, though Dr. Johnson considers him to have said so. Why was not some

* Because he had quarrelled with her, and her letters, afterwards published, must have remained in her own hands.

outcry made at the time, if this was the case? But no outcry is made; not a word said of their being stolen or lost, till here they are all again before the public, "frustra reclamante et ingeminante poeta." How could this be? Mr. Roscoe has an easy solution, and an easy solution for all the coincidences of these extraordinary circumstances,—"*variation* in "*transcription.*"

Who could privately have transcribed so many without its being known? It seems to me impossible for any one to have done this, in Lord Oxford or Pope's house, without detection, considering how *long* a time it would take to transcribe so voluminous a collection. It would be more difficult than, as Dennis says, "to carry on a *conspiracy*, "*against the governor, his country, and his* "*family, in the governor's hall!!*"*

Let the reader think of the *time* that must have been taken up in so transcribing them! the impossibility of its being done in Lord Oxford or Pope's own house, without their knowledge! Consider how many days, weeks, and months, at different times, must have been employed! And where was Pope all this time? Conveniently out of the way, every time the work of transcribing was going on!

At the same time, let the reader never forget that which comes out by the charge against me of republishing part only of the "Narrative

* Criticism on Cato, Johnson's Life of Addison.

in the surreptitious edition"—how came the *very words* in that surreptitious edition, of the publication of which Pope complained so loudly, to be IN HIS OWN?

He who can answer all these questions, (and many more, I have no doubt, might be asked, the more that the point is examined,)

"Erit mihi magnus Apollo."

In truth, I can hardly conceive the possibility of this collection being privately transcribed, even by the amanuenses,* (whom it has been said Pope employed,) without their being detected.

And if this were admitted to be *possible*, the extraordinary coincidence of the same passages being in the surreptitious edition, and in Pope's *own* preface, in my opinion, cannot be accounted for, but by supposing he was the author of *both*. Let the reader never forget this passage.

"HOWEVER, as some of his letters SERVED TO "REVIVE SEVERAL past scenes of FRIENDSHIP, and "others clear the truth of facts in which he had "been misrepresented by COMMON SCRIBBLERS, he

* My own decided opinion is this, that the surreptitious edition of 1735, by the Westminster and London booksellers, was Pope's. The appended narrative, I think, from its internal evidence, proves this; and what I omitted, not with a sinister view, proves it, to my understanding. If this edition, disclaimed by Pope, was *his*, all the rest may be decidedly inferred, and shews his connection with Curll.

"was INDUCED to PRESERVE A FEW of his OWN "LETTERS, as well as HIS FRIENDS!!!" This sentence is, as I have already said, nearly, if not entirely, preserved in the Preface to his own edition of 1737! which Preface, therefore, thus complaining of the letters being stolen, must have been written before the LETTERS WERE STOLEN!! This circumstance I omitted to state in my edition, but I have taken care not to omit it now.

In this surreptitious edition, it is also said, "Some of his friends (Pope's) advised him to print "a collection *himself*, to prevent a worse, but this "he would *by no means* consent to." Does not this excite the idea, that the words were designedly thrown out that he might at last be brought to consent? "*The letters, as I am told,*" (adds the wily author,) "were preserved in *two* books." Does not this almost, as we vulgarly say, "*let the "cat out of the bag*"—one book, to be kept, and one to be used clandestinely?

In the spurious collection to which I refer is a letter from Curll. If this collection was from Pope *himself*, as I cannot but think the reader, who weighs what I have said, must believe, from the various circumstances here enumerated; must he not also admit that the mysterious transaction about the letters was between Pope and Curll? for if Pope was the clandestine author of this edition, of which I have no doubt, then Curll's letter, being

printed in the Appendix to this collection, could only come from Pope himself.

Let us now leave the surreptitious edition, as it is called, and turn our attention, before we have done with the comparison, on Pope's own preface to his authentic edition of 1737.

How vaguely, how obscurely does he speak! Certainly more vaguely than he would have done, if he was really anxious to find out "who that man "*in the dark*" was, who procured, some how or other, copies of his letters, notwithstanding such care taken of them.

"Any *domestic* or *servant*, who can *snatch a* "*letter* from your *pocket* or *cabinet*, is *encouraged* "to that *vile practice!*" I trust old honest John Serle* never acted so ungratefully. Is any account given of any enquiry being made among "such trai- "torous servants and domestics?" Were none of Pope's, none of Lord Oxford's domestics, suspected? Were any *dismissed?* It is, however, a matter of congratulation, that by some means or other Pope's elegant and polished epistles now form part of his works; though, if we believe him, "the *sentiments* "in them *flowed* warm from the heart, *without* "the LEAST THOUGHT *that ever the world should* "*be* WITNESS TO THEM!!"

Let any one compare the letters that are now in his works, with the unadorned and unaffected

* Pope's old servant.

effusions to Judge Fortescue. These, from their style, he never expected, I can well believe, "the "world to be witness of;" but the careful polish of all the letters in the edition of Warburton, if there were no other proof, would be sufficient to convince me, that he *intended* "the world "*should* be witness of them."

Those which were kept "*in cabinets*," no doubt, received the most appropriate polish; for the letters kept even "*in cabinets*" were not more safe than those "*snatched from pockets!*"

Pope loudly complains of booksellers "*dealing* "*with men in the dark!*" He was active enough in prosecuting the bookseller who had these "*dealings* "*with a man in the dark!*" Why was he not as active in endeavouring to find out "who *this man* "*in the dark* was?" Why did he not, when he suffered so much from *domestic* treachery, speak a little more *distinctly*, in his *own preface* to the *authentic* collection, about "this dark gentleman?" With as much activity as he evinced in prosecuting the bookseller, and with the exertions of so many friends, he might surely have brought this "myste- "rious negociator" a little more into light. I verily believe, that no one, conversant with the rules of evidence, can read his *own preface* without being convinced that little was said, (and that vaguely,) because it was not wished that much should be known.

It must be recollected, too, that the correspondence was offered to Curll already *printed;* and this was of a piece with Pope's clandestinely printing "Bolingbroke's Patriot King," which his

"Guide, Philosopher, and Friend,"

never forgave!

The reader is now in possession of some of the principal *facts* which subsequent examination has enabled me to adduce, on the point of debate, and he will weigh the evidence set before him.

Whether Pope contrived, in the manner Dr. Johnson has suggested, to get his letters before the public, is a matter of indifference to me; but it is not a matter of indifference to me whether I shall be thought to make a charge against any one, living or dead, for which I was not prepared to give the reasons that weighed with me in forming that opinion: and having adopted that opinion, it was as much "*my duty,*" as an honest man, to express it, as it was Mr. Roscoe's duty to disprove it, if he thought he saw grounds to believe the contrary.

I have only to add, on this subject, that if I understand him, Mr. Roscoe considers the appendix, to the edition of 1735, as "Curll's counter-"statement;" but could Curll speak of Pope with the warmth in which he is there spoken of, which alone might give reason to suppose it to be Pope's?

I intended, in my edition, to give the whole

appendix to the edition of 1735, as Warburton himself had retained "the advertisement." I did not print it entirely, because, upon consideration, I felt convinced that every reader would say, *ohe jam satis!* besides, "*self-love*" seems to me so evident in every part of it, and to betray its real author, that I thought a portion would prove this as much as the whole narrative. The reader, however, will be enabled to judge and decide for himself, as what I omitted is now printed in the Appendix. I have little fear of having it imputed to me that I meanly suppressed any part, because I thought it would be in Pope's favour! What Mr. Roscoe means by asserting that I have "*substi-*" "*tuted*" a single word in this narrative, I cannot possibly conceive. The portion printed in my edition was literally sent to the printer, not from *transcription*, but from the volume itself, and *printed* from the *printed copy!*

Pope, who, it will be allowed, must know a little more of the matter than either Mr. Roscoe or myself, complains of his letters "being *snatched* "*out of pockets*," or purloined "from *cabinets*." But he never once, to my knowledge, explicitly says, that those letters which had been "*recalled*," transcribed, and deposited, were stolen from the depository, or privately transcribed: and even after he had "recalled them," he declares, in his preface, "he *would not go about to amend them!!*"

If the first case were true, the copies of the letters could not possibly have "*varied* from the "originals." In the second case, some one "must have *gone about to amend them*," if Pope did not; and would he have *adopted* such amendments to a letter, unless he had done it himself? And this circumstance, I suspect, Mr. Roscoe, whose *logic* seems to contend with his *taste*, will still find what logicians call a DILEMMA! on *either* horn of which I leave him for the present to struggle.

In the mean time I will further observe, that Pope, in his own authentic preface, which contains the very *same apology*, in *the same words* as the surreptitious edition, (published *two years before*,) complains that his letters were published "without "the *advantage* of his *second thoughts!!*"

To be sure, if they were printed as sent and received, it could not have been otherwise; but he had an opportunity afterwards of giving all his "*recalled*" epistles the advantage of his *second thoughts*; and such as they appear now, such they appeared in the edition which he *disclaimed*, so *put together*, so *amended*, and *precisely* and in the *same order arranged!*

If Mr. Roscoe, by any ingenuity, should slip off *either horn* of the dilemma, I here leave him to ponder on the last reflection.

I have thus examined the question more fully respecting the clandestine publication of Pope's letters; but I cannot conclude without noticing those charges in Mr. Roscoe's edition which more particularly affect myself.

With respect to Pope's general character, I know not that I have been inconsistent in my opinions, though the mere variation of language has been objected to me as, *substantially*, a contradiction and change of sentiment. Substantially, my opinion is the same respecting Pope's moral character as it always was. I cannot say that Mr. Roscoe has much altered it; but I can say, that his observations on the character and situation of Martha Blount, and the uniform testimony adduced in her favour, ought to have their due weight. But what can we think of the *purity of mind*, or the *innocence of heart*, of him who could write, and *publish*, the translation of Horace,* which outrages every idea of modesty every feeling of decorum, and sense of manly shame? What can we think of that letter, in which the equivocal imagery of "Lady "Mary's NAKEDNESS of soul" is sufficiently ex-

* Printed in Warton's edition, but rejected in mine. This Imitation was not published with Pope's name, but it never was denied to have been published by him; and his being *capable* of doing this ought to be taken into the account in the estimation of his character, particularly when he *professed* so much virtue.

plained, by the idea, seemingly always uppermost in his thoughts, of her personal *nakedness?* what can we think of his purity, who, having described a woman in a common brothel thus disarrayed, and without "drapery," exclaims, in that Imitation of Horace,

> "Her I ..... view,
> "And call her Goddess, Angel,—MONTAGUE?"

what can we think of his purity, who in a letter, to innocent young ladies, has used words which I shall not repeat, but which Rochester only could use; and who with equal libertinism of language, addressing the same young ladies, says, "*St. Austin* "*would have kissed you; St. Jerome would have* "*shaved against your coming; St. Peter would* "*have dried his eyes at the sight of you; St.* "*Thomas would have been for touching and* "*trying you!*"

At all events, Pope's connection with Martha Blount was as mysterious as it seems extraordinary. Cowper domesticated with Mrs. Unwin; but he possessed a mind the most pure and saintly that ever inhabited mortality.

If Pope's character had been such, who could have dared to *hint* suspicion? But was Pope's such a character? Mr. Roscoe reasons as if what I called "*susceptibility*" was as ill applied to Pope as it would be to Cowper. Look at his own acknowledged writings, not only the epistle of Eloisa to Abelard, but Sappho to Phaon, and, above all, the

Wife of Bath's tale, from Chaucer, which Dryden, not very correct himself, professed he declined imitating, in consequence of its indecency; and recollect, that the obscene imitation of Horace was not published in youth, when it might be said, "*lusisse pudet*," but in mature age.

If Pope really had not this susceptibility of temperament, then he was the most cold-blooded dabbler in polluted and polluting imagery that the world ever saw; but to suppose that the most glowing passages of Eloisa did not flow from animated feelings, appears to me, I confess, to be treating Pope worse than he deserves. "Nemo "*gratis* malus est," says Grotius; but, according to Mr. Roscoe, Pope indulged in the grossest images with the coldest heart!!*

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With respect to Pope's DULCINEA, as Mr. Roscoe, in the amiable Quixotism of gallant feelings, has taken up the gauntlet in defence of female *purity*, I shall decline any contest respecting the character and situation of Martha Blount; happy if one human being, in youth or age, shall think

* Let Mr. Roscoe, who contends for Pope's want of *susceptibility*, remember his own lines—

"The well-sung notes shall sooth my pensive ghost,
"He best SHALL PAINT THEM, WHO SHALL FEEL THEM MOST.'

that in vindication of injured innocence this *preux chevalier de vielle court* has not brandished his lance in vain! But I must say that the friends of this damsel, whose name is "as IMMORTAL as "that of her admirer," have no great reason to complain if some shade rests on her memory, who received with complacency indecent and licentious verses and letters from him, who pronounced the "verse ACCURST," that

"Gave Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear,
"Or from the soft-ey'd Virgin stole a tear!"

*Prologue to Satires.*

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I must now say a few more words respecting that important "If," of which so much has been said.

"Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus"—'IF.'

What could have induced an editor of Pope to "re-echo" this absurd charge? It was solemnly advanced against me in the Quarterly Review, and it was a long time before I could possibly conceive to what it alluded. It is the strongest proof how little there is substantially objectionable in my edition, to find such a *mole-hill* magnified into a MOUNTAIN!

The history of this iniquitous "if" is this. In a sub-note to Pope's epistle on the Characters of

Women, in reference to Warton having spoken of a charge brought by Walpole against Pope, namely, that he had taken a bribe to suppress the character of Atossa, which did not appear till *after the death of the* Duchess of Marlborough, for whom the character was intended,—I added, (in answer to Mr. Warton's observation, "this is the greatest "blemish in Pope's moral character,")

"A blemish! call it rather, IF it be true, the most "shameful dereliction of every thing honourable!!"

Now mark, reader, in the final note to this very epistle of Pope, my deliberate sentiments are thus recorded: "I do not think it (this story) should "be admitted WITHOUT THE CLEAREST EVIDENCE, "as we should receive *cum grano salis* whatever "comes from Walpole's party against Pope." This was my declaration. In the Life of Pope, I said, "I rejected such a story with indigna-"tion!!" Would it, will it, can it, be believed, that the insertion of this little "IF" in the sub-note, notwithstanding my soleman declaration, *is a proof* of *my conviction* of the *truth of the story!!* I repeat the whole again: "If Pope took a bribe, "it was infamous; but we ought not to believe any "thing against him on the authority of Walpole, "and for myself I reject it with indignation!!"

Now you will find, my dear Sir, the very same "if" employed by me respecting the motives attri-

buted by Mr. Dibdin to Dr. Warton, on account of his Essay on Pope. I say, "if Warton was "actuated by such motives, it was infamous;" but does this prove that I believe it?

Shakespeare says, "your 'if' is your only "peace-maker!" This said "if" has been to me "your *only quarrel maker!*"

"*If*" I recollect rightly, so long ago as the review of Warton's edition of Pope, the Monthly Review, in a very able article, expressed the very same sentiments that I have done upon the same fact; and I am mistaken, "*if*" not with the same qualifying "*if.*" "*If*" so, upon this point, at least, I may, perhaps, experience some candour from the present conductors of that work, "*if*" they shall find the case to be as I have stated.

I can only repeat, that when it is said I used this qualifying syllable, to shew "I believed" the fact imputed to Pope, I, who ought to know something of the matter, as positively affirm I used the word to shew I did *not* believe it. And further, if there could be any doubt respecting my meaning, the passage in my Life of Pope would have decided, I should have hoped, the sense in which I used the word (hypothetically,) instead of being brought against me as a contradiction! I am sorry to find that Mr. Roscoe, who has never imputed to me wilful misrepresentation, should, in this instance, have "re-echoed" the

nonsensical cry of those who have written with not half the candour of himself.

I cannot dismiss the subject without one more observation. It has turned out, that, instead of my being a monster of envy and malice, so cautious have I been in bringing charges against Pope, that every accusation which has been examined has, upon discussion, been found to make the more against him. Respecting the bribe, said to be received for suppressing the character of Atossa, for the reason given, I think it due to justice utterly to reject the story; but having been thus pressed, I shall not now conceal, that if a thought could be entertained for a moment that it was true, the idea would be corroborated by the fact, that the character did not appear till *after* the death of the Duchess of Marlborough. That this character was admitted into the poem when first written may be presumed, because Pope himself says there were "*chasms*," which could only apply to characters for some particular reasons *left out*. Nevertheless, I do *not believe* a story so degrading to him, upon such evidence.

I am much obliged to Mr. Roscoe for not imputing to me fraudulent and deliberate misrepresentations, (of which I am incapable,) or malignant feelings, the existence of which I could not have believed, but from the treatment which I have experienced. My coarsest antagonist is in the

grave; so is every feeling of unkindness. I am sorry that I have ever spoken disrespectfully of Mr. D'Israeli, which was only done under a sense of provocation which I did not deserve. And here I hope to end all that I shall ever have to say on a subject, of which the literary public may well be tired, as I am most heartily tired myself—but I cannot go down to the grave without a wish to have my cause, as far as I am able to effect it, "reported "right."

Most assuredly, if I had had any opportunity of correcting some of my notes, or of omitting others, I should ingenuously and manfully have acknowledged those errors or mistakes,

> "..... Quas aut incuria fudit,
> "Aut humana parùm cavit natura."

No opportunity has ever been given me, of retracting any position which subsequent reflection may have convinced me was untenable; no courtesy conceded, of explaining, enforcing, or omitting, *one iota* of what I had written. Every thing that I have said has been submitted to the severest examination that any literary work has, perhaps, ever experienced; and what is the result? I verily believe in my favour—proving that I had *no motive*, but a regard to truth, in pointing out those qualities, which, upon the maturest consideration, appeared to mark Pope's character as a man.

As a poet, I sought not to *depreciate*, but to *discriminate*, and assign to him his proper rank and station in his art, among English poets; below Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton, in the highest order of imaginative or impassioned poetry; but above Dryden, Lucretius, and Horace, in moral and satirical. Inferior to Dryden in lyric sublimity; equal to him in painting characters from real life, (such as are so powerfully delineated in Absalom and Achitophel;) but superior to him *in passion*—for what ever equalled, or ever will approach, in its kind, the Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard? In consequence of the exquisite pathos of this epistle, I have assigned Pope a poetical rank far above Ovid. I have placed him above Horace, in consequence of the perfect finish of his satires and moral poems; but in descriptive poetry, such as Windsor Forest, beneath Cowper or Thomson. I refer to my edition of his Works to prove that I have kept this discrimination essentially in my view.

As to his character as a man, I believe all the elaborate arguments that have been advanced will not, with all his acknowledged excellencies, go very far in shewing that he was neither artful, irritable, of inordinate self-love, affected, nor indecent; and I conclude all that I have been again forced to say, by expressing my decided conviction, that his moral character will be best defended, not by denying those imperfections which are and will

be visible as long as his works remain—which cannot be concealed, and ought not to be palliated—but by attributing them, as I have done, to *physical and moral causes;* to his helpless and idolized infancy; to his life, a long disease; to his nourished self-love, and his contracted education. And, after all, when what I have advanced shall be viewed with impartiality, I believe my general estimate is likely to be that which the sober judgment of ingenuous minds will confirm.

I here conclude; and remain, with unaltered respect and regard to yourself, as a man, a scholar, and christian, though we are of different religious communities,

Yours, most faithfully,

W. L. BOWLES.

*Sept.* 24, 1824.

## LETTER V.

*Bath, Sept.* —, 1824.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is by no means my intention or my wish to become a party in the controversy respecting Mr. Pope and his writings. Yet I must frankly own, that an attentive re-consideration of the documents relative to Curll's surreptitious publication of his letters, and of the circumstances which led to it, combined with the new points of view in which you have, in the preceding letter, placed your arguments on that subject, have excited in my mind, notwithstanding Mr. Roscoe's able defence of Pope, very strong suspicions as to the part which the latter took in that mysterious transaction.

In admiration of Mr. Pope, as a poet, I will yield to no one; though I could have wished most devoutly that he had blotted out from his productions, both in verse and prose, many expressions and passages, either containing indelicate allusions, or language bordering on impiety and profaneness. Juvenile minds, more especially, must be most

seriously injured by such objectionable passages; and no persons can be made wiser or better by them.

Several of Mr. Pope's letters to Lady M. W. Montague are in this respect highly objectionable. But his Imitation of Horace's Satire,* (which, for the first time, I have only just now perused,) and to which you have more than once referred in the course of this correspondence, far exceeds in indelicacy and indecency any thing that I could possibly have expected to come from the pen which wrote the very indecorous letters to that celebrated lady. No friend to religion and good morals; no father of a family; no instructor, public or private; could place in the hands of any individual of the rising generation, either male or female, a composition so obscene and disgusting. I am surprised to find, that the learned Warton should have admitted such a composition into his edition of Mr. Pope's Works. That *you* rejected with indignation the thought of inserting it in *yours*, I am credibly informed. Yet although Mr. Dibdin (from whose recent publication† I have sent you a few extracts) so pathetically deplores that any such productions of Mr. Pope should have found their way into his works, and piously warns all future editors of the same, "*in the present age of prying research*," to avoid such conduct, from whatever motive it may proceed; yet he has not thought proper to notice

* Lib. i. sat. 2. † Library Companion, p. 731.

*your omission* of this most disgusting piece of writing with any share of those liberal encomiums, which he so lavishly bestows on other editors and authors; but in his animadversion upon such conduct he has even placed *your* edition of Pope's Works on the same footing of censure with that of Dr. Warton. This appears to be not altogether fair; yet it is possible that the great Bibliomaniac might not have compared your edition of Pope, in this particular, with that of Dr. Warton. For this neglect, however, no one but himself is responsible.

Believe me to be, my dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

## LETTER VI.

*Bremhill, Oct.* 12, 1824.

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING entered minutely into an examination of the question respecting the publication of POPE's letters, and answered such accusations as chiefly affected *myself;* I feel it incumbent on me not to pass over some remarks on the subject by the Rev. Mr. Dibdin, in his late work the "Library Companion," from which you have favoured me with a few extracts.

Speaking of the editors of Pope, (Dr. Warton and myself,) we are told by Mr. Dibdin that *the Doctor's edition* did not *kick the beam,* and that *my labours by no means lacked patronage.**

My edition was to be considered as having no higher pretension than being an enlarged edition of Warton, with a new life, original letters, and additional notes, almost all the notes of Warton being retained. By the latter part of Mr. Dibdin's information I must feel gratified; and consider the circumstance as the most decisive

* Library Companion, p. 731.

testimony that no motives, but those of a sacred regard to truth, could have weighed with me as editor.

These trifling circumstances I should not have thought it worth while to notice, if another remark did not occur, which more especially calls for some remonstrance.

" *In both the editions of Pope* (Warton's, and " Bowles's) *there are things* (says Mr. Dibdin) " *which, considering the respectable characters of* " *the editors, ought not to have been introduced.*"*

Mr. Dibdin ought to have done ONE EDITOR at least this justice, that a particularly offensive and infamous poem was admitted into *Warton's edition;* which Mr. Bowles, though satisfied of its authenticity, *indignantly* rejected. Nay, he went so far, (as Messrs. Cadell and Davies, if they recollect, will testify for him,) that he wrote to them to say, that " no consideration would induce him to " have any concern with an edition of Pope, if his " rejection of this poem was not acceded to by the " proprietors." Some other parts of Pope's writings were also expunged on the same account. Mr. Bowles did not expunge the " Double Mistress" from the Memoirs of Scriblerus. This was retained, after some hesitation; because, though the editor would not sanction gross licentiousness, he was anxious to avoid the other extreme,

* Ibid, p. 731.

with which he has been charged, that of "*clerical* "*priggism!!*"

If some offensive passages in the letters to the Misses Blount were first published in his edition, many passages were entirely suppressed; because the rule laid down was this,—on no account to admit from the MSS. one word which could be thought *more offensive* to good morals and decency, than any *which Pope himself had published.*

It may be thought that there would be few things that could exceed some of his own avowed productions; but there were many passages of the grossest indecency, to which nothing but the unjust treatment which he has received could have caused the editor even so much as to allude.

Mr. Dibdin adds, "he has seen *some origindl* "*matter in MS. which he* TRUSTS will be NEVER "seen in print."

Perhaps he may have seen the last lines to the affecting verses on Martha Blount; perhaps he may have seen much of what Mr. Bowles, from reverence to a man of genius, *rejected* with disdain. Mr. Bowles professes as ardent an admiration of Pope's poetry as Mr. Dibdin; he cordially agrees with him in the last sentiment; and he hopes that no future editor will be *less* indulgent to the poet's moral character than he has been: he is sure, and publish what he may, he never can be more vilified than himself.

From Mr. Dibdin's entertaining work I transcribe with pain the following remark: "*Its object* "(viz. Warton's Essay on the Life and Genius of "Pope) appeared to be to DEPRECIATE the poet "in the *estimation* of posterity; and yet this "*depreciation* was guarded, qualified, and frittered "down, as if the other had been AFRAID or ASHAMED "to avow his *professed object!!!*"

Here I must again bring in my "If." *If* such was Dr. Warton's object, he was heartless and unprincipled. Do I believe he was, because I use the word "if?"*

From grateful feelings to the dead I assert, a purpose so unworthy never once entered into his heart. His object was to appreciate, *less vaguely* than had been done, Pope's rank in poetry: as to "guarding, frittering down, and qualifying," he was only anxious not to be misunderstood, as he has been by a gentleman and scholar, who has admitted into his excellent and candid publication *this only uncandid remark.*

I am, dear Sir, &c.

W. L. BOWLES.

* See observations on "if," p. 50.

AN

# EXAMINATION AND REFUTATION

OF

# MR. ROSCOE's ARGUMENTS

RESPECTING THE

# Rank of Pope as a Poet.

## ΤΟΝ ΔΑΠΑΜΕΙΒΟΜΙΝΟΣ.

*Homer*, passim.

---

Quare ut not intelligere possit, sed ne omnino possit non intelligere curandum est.

*Quintil.*

If you would make a song, or write one,
Or get some fiddler to indite one,
Don't think, because 'tis understood
By men of sense, 'tis therefore good;
But let your words so well be plann'd,
That *critics* can't misunderstand.

*Homer, Travestie.*

## LETTER VII.

*Bath, Sept. 22, 1824.*

MY DEAR SIR,

On looking farther into Mr. Roscoe's new edition of Pope, (which you have not seen,) I find him controverting, in his "Estimate of the "Poetical Character and Writings of Pope,"* the principles which you have laid down respecting the scale of poetic merit. If I have not quite tired you by the extracts already sent, I will transcribe and send you the heads of Mr. Roscoe's arguments, as briefly as I can fairly collect them from his short introductory essay.

"There is, perhaps, no poet," he observes, "excepting Shakespear alone, whose works are applicable to so many purposes, or are quoted on so many different occasions," as those of Pope.

"Considerations of this nature have not, however, prevented some writers, and particularly the two last editors of the works of Pope, from attempting to *detract from the high* reputation which he has *so long enjoyed;* and to assign him only an inferior *rank in the scale* of poetical excellence. Dr. Warton informs us, that 'the

* Vol. ii. p. 3.

'*largest portion* of the works of Pope is of the didactic, 'moral, and satiric kind; and consequently not of the 'most *poetic species* of poetry; whence it is manifest,' says he, 'that good sense and judgment were his cha-'racteristic excellencies, rather than fancy and inven-'tion.' Mr. Bowles has asserted, that 'all images 'drawn from what is beautiful or sublime in the works 'of nature, are *more* beautiful and sublime than images 'drawn from the works of art;' whence he contends, that as Pope was conversant with the latter rather than the former, 'he is not to be classed among the higher 'order of poets;' and that 'the career, which he 'opened to himself, was in the *second* order of poetry.'"

In reply to this assertion, Mr. Roscoe observes,

"There is, in fact, no poetry in any subject, except what is called forth by the genius of the poet. The objects presented to us may be *magnificent*, or *terrific*, or *pleasing*, or *mournful*, or *ludicrous*; but whether they are *poetical*, or not, must wholly depend on the powers of the artist by whom they are represented."

"The Odyssey is not so sublime as the Iliad; but it cannot be said, that it is on that account less poetical."*

....."Yet according to the rule now attempted to be established, Homer was a poet of the first order when he wrote the Iliad, and only of the second when he wrote the Odyssey."

....."There are no great subjects, but such as are made so by the genius of the artist.'†.....

"Every nation has its *limbo* of poets, *flentes in limine*

* Page 4, ibid. † Page 5, ibid.

*primo*; whilst, on the other hand, poems on the most unfavourable subjects have, through the mere genius of their authors, been engraven on the tablets of immortality. Thus we have the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, of Homer; the Georgics of Virgil; the Chess-Play of Vida; the Bees of Rucellai; the Syphilis of Fracastoro; .....; the Lutrin of Boileau; ..... the Rape of the Lock, by Pope; the School-mistress of Shenstone; the Task, by Cowper; the Deserted Village, by Goldsmith; the Cotter's Saturday Night, by Burns; and the humorous or ludicrous compositions of Butler and of Swift."

"*We have been so often told that poetry exists in inanimate objects*, that we seem to believe it, and thus become the dupes of our own phraseology." "We are finely told that there are

> 'Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> 'Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.'

But it is only the contemplative, or in other words the poetical, mind, that finds them,"* &c. "The question, then, is not, whether Pope, or any other author, has selected the most sublime, the most romantic, the most ludicrous, the most promising, or the most unfavourable subjects; whether he has drawn them from the works of nature, or the works of art; but whether he has animated them with the living breath of his own genius," &c. &c.

"The finest landscape that Rubens, perhaps, ever painted, is the representation of a flat and uniform country in a shower of rain," &c.

* Pp. 6 and 7, ibid.

"It has, however, been the practice of those who have attempted to depreciate the talents of Pope, to admit that he occasionally exhibited powers which placed him on an equality with the loftiest sons of song. Thus we are informed by one of his critics,* that in his Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard he appears on the high ground of the poet of nature; and that in his Rape of the Lock, where he gives a more poetical employment to the more dignified order of genii, he is equal to Shakespear."† "After such passages, and many others of the same kind," observes Mr. Roscoe, "can it be allowed them to state these acknowledged excellencies by way of exception only to the general tenor of the author's productions?"‡

"That the inventive powers of Pope were confined only to a few particular instances is, however, an assertion not founded on fact."....."The allegorical poems of Pope, being founded chiefly on fiction, and introducing beings of a new and fanciful character in poetry, exhibit greater powers of imagination than are required for works of the former description,§ and entitle him to rank with those authors, who, like Shakes-

* Mr. Bowles. † Page 8, ibid.

‡ "Pope must be judged by the rank in which he "stands amongst those of the French school, not the "Italian; among those whose delineations are taken more "from manners than nature. When I say that this is his "predominant character, I must be insensible to every thing "exquisite in poetry, if I did not except, *instanter*, the "Epistle of Eloisa," &c. *Bowles.*

§ Viz. Epic Poems, founded on historical events.

pear and Spenser, have pictured out to us the forms of things unseen, and have given to

'Airy nothing
'A local habitation, and a name.'"*

Mr. Roscoe I find repeating his objections to your scale of poetic merit, in his reply to the very just encomiums which you have passed on Pope's "Rape of the Lock;" which objections he thus sums up:

"If, then, Pope is to be degraded to a secondary rank, let it be understood that it is not because he has been found unequal to any subject, which he has attempted, from the sublime strains of the Messiah, and the deep pathos of the Epistle of Eloisa, to the keen satire of the Dunciad, or the sportive pages of the Rape of the Lock, but because he has not undertaken some work *of a higher order of poetry!* As if any works could be of a higher order than those which announce the awful *predictions* of futurity, and the sacred mysteries of religion; which awaken the tenderest sympathies of the human bosom; which embody and bring before us the liveliest pictures and most faithful representations of real life; which correct and discountenance vice and folly by the just severity of satire; or which instruct and amend the heart by lessons of wisdom, morality, and truth."†

Mr. Roscoe I again discover, in the notes to Pope's epilogue to the play of Jane Shore, quoting

* Page 9, ibid.

† Roscoe's Pope, vol. iii. pp. 219, 220.

you in support of his own poetic principles. Your note concludes with this sentiment; "In truth, "genius can *make* at all times a 'Cæsar' as inte- "resting as an 'Edward or Henry.'" On which Mr. Roscoe thus animadverts:

"This last remark is indisputably true, and ought not to pass unobserved by those who contend, that the excellence of the poet chiefly depends on the nature of the subject.*

These knotty points I shall leave it to yourself and Mr. Roscoe to settle; being convinced, that I shall not fail to be interested and enlightened upon the subject by the discussion.

And believe me yours,

My dear Sir, ever,

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* Vol. iii. page 324, ibid.

## LETTER VIII.

*Sept.* 30, 1824.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR extracts have been of great service to me. I believe that most of my literary inadvertences have arisen from trusting *to memory* in quotations (and this even from myself), on account of the irksomeness of transcribing. Nothing can be fairer than the copious "extracts" given; and my observations on them, in the order in which they stand before the reader, will, I am confident, have the greater weight.

I have never, as I can say with perfect sincerity, wilfully misstated a word of others; but have been, on the contrary, always anxious to see the drift and substance of the arguments, whatever they were, which my literary opponents have brought against me. Is it not singular, that I have never experienced myself, as I conceive, common justice of this sort from any one who has opposed me?

The ground-work of my poetical criticism was laid down on the following, as they appear to me, *incontrovertible* data:

"Those who have attained the highest rank in poetry, as Homer, Shakespear, and Milton, will be found invariably to have drawn their poetical *imagery* more from NATURE than from art; and have been distinguished for pourtraying the PASSIONS of the human heart, rather than *manners* of particular periods of society.

"Without confining myself to epic or dramatic poetry, I will say, that those poems which display the most beautiful and sublime imagery from NATURE, and which most powerfully pourtray the *passions* of the human heart, will be found, in all ages, to be of the HIGHEST ORDER OF POETRY."

If you turn to my definitions, you will find this to be the basis on which they rest. My first opponent begins by asserting, "I confined my ideas of poetry" to outward *nature!* I replied, look at the *second sentence* of my proposition. After I had publicly pointed out the very passages, one should scarcely have thought that the *next* writer would say the same thing—Mr. Bowles confines his ideas of poetry to representations of external nature!! Thus, with the palpable perversion constantly *pointed out*, and as constantly repeated, my opponents have maintained the fight, ding, dong!

I repeat, "nature is *more* poetical than *art;* but

"PASSIONS, PASSIONS, PASSIONS, are the SOUL of "poetry; and these are always more adapted to "the HIGHER ORDER OF POETRY than *manners.*" Mr. Roscoe had my volume before him. The second sentence in my proposition is a matter of ocular evidence: he has read, or ought to have read, my vindication and explanation. No matter! he also echoes so far the same chorus as to omit "*passions.*"

Another point of attack has been, that I made the "subject" of a poem the criterion of the poet's GENIUS! I said exactly the reverse; "you are *not* "to judge of the *subject alone;* because, if YOU DO, "Blackmore would be a greater *poet* than Pope!"

Even Mr. Roscoe seems to admit the same objection, when he speaks of those "who contend "that the excellence of the poet chiefly depends "on the nature of the subject!!"

I might illustrate this pertinacity by a simile, not of the *higher order* of *poetical* illustration! I might say, no one ought to *dance a minuet* in a Bath ball-room without coat, waistcoat, and small-clothes!! *Secundum leges Ricardi Nash!* Here come my opponents in full cry. Mr. Bowles says it is enough to have a coat—*without small-clothes!*

I say, gentlemen, pray be so good as to inspect what I have written. It is no matter. Mr. Bowles asserts, that a gentleman may dance a minuet in a Bath ball-room "*without his breeches!*"

If you read the answers which I have specifically given to all Lord Byron's *instances*, you will be able to judge whether Mr. Roscoe's new array of *instances*, to prove Pope to be in the first order of poets, will avail more than the instances of the former. I rejoice to lay hold of *instances*. The last editor of Pope has played *into my hands* by his "examples" of Vida, Cowper, &c. in such a manner as I could scarcely have *expected* from a man of sense. Not one of them shall pass without being examined. I have no doubt of turning them—I hope you will think *triumphantly*—against himself, as I am sure I have done in other cases, and with higher antagonists; because I know the ground-work of my criticism, fairly represented, to be immoveable. Why do all my critical opponents *veer* and *shift* from my plain positions? Is it not, because without doing so they feel those positions UN-ASSAILABLE? Why does Mr. Roscoe say, "*We have been* TOLD *there is poetry in inanimate* "*objects;*" and add the profound remark, that "without a '*poetical mind*' there is no poetry in "any thing?"

You will see this *profound* observation taken notice of in its place; but if he had done me *half the justice* you have done to *him*, or, if he had even *read* what he has taken the pains to *answer*, he would have found, before his eyes, in my "estimation of Pope's poetical character," that,

speaking of the very humblest department of poetry, DESCRIPTION, I required *not only* a "*poetical* "*mind,*" but a POETICAL HEART also; and moreover, an eye conversant with the "minutest beauties "of nature!"

I have confined myself in this letter to the palpable misrepresentations of my opponents. The subject will be pursued more fully in my next letter; and trusting Mr. Roscoe will have no reason to complain of want of *fairness* in me, I remain,

Yours most truly,

W. L. BOWLES.

## LETTER XI.

MY DEAR SIR, *Bath, Oct.* 1, 1824.

I FEEL much obliged to you for your letter, which I think may constitute an important part of your defence against Mr. Roscoe. Your arguments, as appears from the statement in your last communication, have certainly not been fairly represented in this controversy by some, if not all, of your opponents. For this reason I perfectly agree with you in the propriety of laying the sentiments contained in your letters to me before the public, and with as much dispatch as may be consistent with the accuracy and fidelity due to the cause in which you are engaged.

I am not, however, surprised that you should feel tired of the subject. And as you cannot, perhaps, express your sentiments on the different points of this literary dispute more decidedly or more distinctly than you have already done, I am not at all surprised that you should have resolved to take a final leave of it, after the present publication has made its appearance. *Vive et vale!*

## LETTER X.

My Dear Sir, *Oct.* 4, 1824.

I was in hope by this time to have concluded the examination of the material arguments, affecting myself, and those brought forward in defence of Pope. I must confess that I thought Mr. Roscoe's arguments respecting the letters neither calculated to bear discussion nor even plausible; but I was pleased to hear and to find that he had not used any language unbecoming a scholar to a scholar, and a gentleman to a gentleman. When, however, he proceeds to examine my critical premises respecting the principles of poetry, I was indeed grieved that he, also, had omitted "passions," and countenanced the idea, that I had made the *subject* alone a test of "*excellence* in poetry!" Having laid down my pen, after the controversy with Lord Byron, I then said, the same palpable mistatements will be urged again, though I have so often repeated

the propositions as they stand in my edition of Pope, respecting the loftier "subjects" of poetry; but I did not expect this open misstatement to be repeated by a gentleman of Mr. Roscoe's character, who must have had my edition of Pope before him. He could not surely have read the propositions and distinctions without perceiving the connection. If he had neither seen my answer to Mr. Campbell, nor my vindication against the Quarterly Review, he might have seen, in my edition under his eyes, the sentence which I have so often repeated, and which now again, I fear, I shall repeat in vain.

Why does Mr. Roscoe persist in arguing as if I contended that "the excellence of a poet depends "on the nature of the subject on which he treats?" He must know that I never "*contended*" for any thing of the kind. He must know that I expressly disavowed any thing so absurd. He must have seen, if he read the three first sentences of my propositions together, that I said quite the contrary. These are my words:

"I presume it will be readily granted, that all images drawn from what is beautiful and sublime in the works of NATURE are *more* beautiful and sublime than any images from art, &c. *In like manner*, those PASSIONS which belong to nature in general are MORE ADAPTED to the HIGHER ORDER of poetry, than incidental and transient MANNERS.

"A description of a FORREST" (this regards the first proposition) "is MORE poetical than a description" (presupposing adequate talents) "of a cultivated garden; and the PASSIONS pourtrayed in the Epistle of Eloisa, render such a poem (whatever might be the difference of merit in point of *execution**) *more poetical* than a poem founded on the incidents, characters, and modes of artificial life—for instance, the Rape of the Lock."

Such are my three first sentences connected with each other, that portion relating to PASSIONS being the *most important.*

In this quotation I have corrected a trifling verbal oversight, which makes no difference in the substance of the sentiment; and even if there could have been, from unguarded and hasty expressions, any doubt of my meaning, the distinction I made in what followed must have decided the sense.

"Let me NOT be considered as asserting that the SUBJECT ALONE constitutes poetical excellency. The EXECUTION is to be taken into consideration at the SAME TIME, otherwise Blackmore would be a greater poet than Pope."

I ask common sense—I ask common honesty—whether it is fair that this should be turned, as it has obstinately been, and as even now is "ECHOED" by Mr. Roscoe, into—the EXCELLENCE of the poet

* That is, between this poem and the Rape of the Lock, though it were granted the Rape of the Lock might even exceed it in *perfect finish.*

chiefly *depends on the nature of the subject?* when I said, "it does NOT depend on the subject, but "the subject and treatment TOGETHER!!"

To make misrepresentation impossible, I added, "the SUBJECT and EXECUTION are EQUALLY to be "considered. The one respecting the POETRY" and "the other the ART and POWERS of the POET!!"

"The poetical subject and the ART and talents "of the poet should be always kept in mind." With "regard to the first, Pope cannot be classed among "the highest order of poets, (that is, with Shakes-"peare and Milton;) with regard to the other, no "one was ever his SUPERIOR!!"*

Mr. Roscoe has admitted the justice with which I spoke of Pope's exquisite and impassioned Eloisa: why then talk of "*inanimate*" *objects?* or describe me as thinking that "the excellence of the "poet *chiefly depends* ON THE SUBJECT?" No! "On the greatness of a subject, and the powers with "which it is treated, and on BOTH CONJOINTLY "depend the excellence of the poet, and his RANK "IN HIS ART."

I can only say, having appealed to my own words again and again, my object in estimating Pope's moral and poetical character was, to define, not to detract, to DISCRIMINATE, not to DEPRECIATE! The reader, however, will now see, with respect to his poetical character, what I did

* Bowles's Pope, vol. x.

say, and what I did not; and he will see "that I "did NOT CONTEND that the excellence of the poet "depends on the nature of the subject, without "equal regard to the *execution*.

One thing I have said before—I repeat it again—"if any thing more than another could prove the "*irrefragableness* of my principles of criticism, it "is, that no one has contended against them, "without first disconnecting the sentences, and "perverting the plain sense."

I instantly concede, and always have done so, that *moral* and *satirical* poems, as treated by Pope, must be infinitely *superior*, in point of poetic excellence, to the highest subjects of poetry treated less perfectly. But I would ask Mr. Roscoe, whether he, or Pope himself, would have thought of placing "Homer on his adamantine throne" of eternal fame, if he had only written *satires* or *moral poems*, although as *perfect* in their kind as the Iliad and Odyssey?

I would ask Mr. Roscoe, or Mr. Roscoe's little boy, to point out the *most poetical passages* in the Iliad or Odyssey; and when he has so done, ask him whether all these passages do not decide the superior test of NATURE and PASSIONS? and whether any transcription of *manners* could make such poetry?

I am certain that when Mr. Roscoe places him, whose works he has edited, in the FIRST

CLASS of poets with Shakespeare and Spenser, he only confirms a sentence from his own bard,

"Praise undeserv'd is censure in disguise."

Before I proceed to examine Mr. Roscoe's instances, let me first notice what he says respecting my "own admissions." I have admitted, it seems, in a note on the epilogue to Jane Shore, that "GENIUS" can make a Cæsar as poetical as an Henry or Edward!! To be sure it can. Cæsar, and Henry, and Edward, are all poetical characters; and he who, by the powers of his genius, and his mighty spell, can call up Cæsar or Brutus, (removed so far from us by time, that we might almost say,

"What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?")

and bring them as living, breathing men before us, may well deserve to be classed with the magic poet, who,

"Modò me Thebis, modò ponit Athenis."

How are we moved when the lofty stoic, in Julius Cæsar, in the silent agony of heart, sorrowing, but unsubdued by sorrow, after his quarrel with Cassius, exclaims,

"No man bears sorrow better! Portia's dead!
"*Cas.* How 'scap'd I killing, when I vex'd you so?
"*Brut.* Speak no more of her."

Dryden and Rowe would have *described* these FEELINGS in *fifty* lines.

Who is not affected to tears, when the lofty Brutus, mingling with the sterner feelings of his character gentleness and tenderness, takes the instrument from the sleeping boy's hand? Let me extract a line or two:

" Bear with me, good boy, I am most forgetful.
" Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile,
" And touch thy instrument a strain or two?
" I will not hold thee long. If I do live,
" I will be good to thee.

" Oh! murd'rous slumber,
" Lay'st thou thy leaden mace upon my boy,
" That plays thee music. Gentle knave, good night!
" I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee.
" If thou dost nod, thou'lt break thy instrument—
" I'll take it from thee!"

When Mr. Roscoe turns my own words against me, as admitting that " genius" can make a Cæsar as poetically interesting as an Edward, and triumphantly adduces the admission for the consideration of those who " contend that the excellence " of the poet chiefly depends on the nature of the " subject;" I answer, that " genius" can indeed, by such touches, make a Cæsar, and even a Brutus, as interesting and poetical as an Edward or Henry. But can " genius" make " an Helluo," whose " fate was a salmon's belly," as POETICALLY-interesting:

" A salmon's belly, Helluo, was thy fate.
" The doctor call'd declares all help too late.

"Mercy, cries Helluo, mercy on my soul!
"Is there no hope? alas! then bring the jowl."

Can "genius" make this same Helluo as poetically-interesting as Edward or Henry? Can "genius" make the "frugal crone," and "poor "Narcissa," (*ladies* introduced to illustrate the *characters* of MEN,*) can it make these, or

"Sappho, with diamonds and a dirty smock,"

or Philomede, or Chloe, or Atossa, as poetical as those lovely and beautiful creations of feminine sweetness—an Ophelia, Desdemona, Imogen, Miranda, Jessica, or the more terrible Lady Macbeth? can it make even the delightful SYLPHS, trembling over the fume of a coffee-pot, as poetical, in the loftiest sense of the word, as Ariel, and the elves of moonlight in the Midsummer Night's Dream?

Would any person of sound sense, to say nothing of the acknowledged principles of criticism, with only these characters in his thought, assert, that Pope was in the FIRST CLASS OF HIS ART, or, to be compared with that solitary master spirit, who embodied forth such lovely creations?

I believe the very assertion would excite derision. But these characters are not to be *compared*, you will say—they are not of the same kind! Doubtless! they are of a very different kind, of a kind in

* In Pope's Epistle on Man.

"the highest order of poetry," which the others are *not*, however perfectly and admirably drawn, nor can any genius make them such.

It is something at last to find Mr. Roscoe does not echo the nonsensical invective of my calling "Pope no poet!" Perhaps it may, in time, be admitted, that in my criterion of poetry I have spoken of "PASSIONS" as the most essential part; tho the complacency with which this word has been omitted by so many critical opponents, not excepting Mr. Roscoe, seems almost to exceed belief.

A fair arguer would reason in this manner. "Let me look at these fundamental propositions again. Can I say that Mr. Bowles requires bare "unselected nature?" No: for I see in the proposition, and as it has been enforced in the answer to Lord Byron, he speaks of the "*sublime and beautiful*" IN NATURE. Can I say that ART is as poetical as what is SUBLIME, &c. in NATURE, when I recollect that the most beautiful images from ART are rendered poetical by associations with NATURE, either from adjuncts of beauty derived from air, water, light; or affecting associations with the sympathies of the heart? Can I represent Mr. Bowles as confining his ideas of poetry to *outward inanimate nature*, when, as the chief point of his proposition, he speaks of *passions*, &c.? Can I say he has made "the "subject alone the proof of the excellence of the

"poet," when he expressly says, that *execution* is to be *considered equally?* Can I quibble upon the word "poetical," and then say no object or subject is intrinsically *more poetical* than another, but all depends upon the genius of the poet—Can I say this, when, if I look to Homer, &c. I find there are subjects which no art or genius can render so poetical as others; and that, therefore, some subjects and objects must be more *adapted* than others to the HIGHER ORDER OF POETRY?

Mr. Roscoe would have saved himself and me this trouble, if he had fairly weighed, and duly considered, my specific answers to Lord Byron's arguments: he would have found that my axiom

"Recalcitrat undique tutum."

If Mr. Roscoe's arguments are well founded, and Pope is entitled to rank with Shakespeare and Spenser, I can only say, away with all obsolete notions of the "epic or tragic" being the highest exertions of the human mind in poetry. Let Horace learn the absurdity of his own opinion,

"Nec si quis scribat, uti nos
"Sermoni propriora, PUTES HUNC ESSE POETAM.
"Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior, atque os
"MAGNA SONATURUM, des nominis hujus honorem."

Let Longinus seek another source of the SUBLIME, Aristotle bend to the new Stagirite, and Pope

himself learn the true principles of CRITICISM from his last editor!*

I shall examine, more specifically, Mr. Roscoe's further arguments, in my next; and in the mean time I remain, with many thanks for the trouble you have taken in the extracts, yours, &c.

W. L. BOWLES.

* It is singular that no answer has ever yet been returned to my quotation of that one comprehensive passage in the *Essay on Criticism!*

" UNERRING NATURE, still divinely bright,
" One clear, unchang'd, and universal light;
" Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
" At once the *source*, and *end*, and TEST of art."

## LETTER XI.

*Oct.* —, 1824.

MY DEAR SIR,

LEST I may be said to deal in vague generalities, let us now pursue the course of Mr. Roscoe's further arguments, and see whether they will, or will not, bear closer examination.

From respect to him, I do this; and I am much deceived, if all the examples he has adduced, like those adduced by Lord Byron, will not appear "as "the baseless fabric of a vision," before "those "principles" of poetry, of which he seems to think so meanly.

There is nothing like bringing these things to the test of definition: I ask for nothing more — but give me fair play—do not say I assert what I never did assert—do not attack my statements garbled—if my positions will not bear the completest examination, perhaps Mr. Roscoe's *new instances* may overthrow them. Let us see.

Requesting the reader to turn back to my positions, as given by myself, let us first, as my own are so fallible, compare Mr. Roscoe's "PRINCIPLES "OF POETICAL CRITICISM."

We are gravely informed by Mr. Roscoe, that there is

"Perhaps *no poet*, excepting Shakespeare alone, whose works are *applicable* to so *many purposes*, or are *quoted* on so many different occasions, as those of Pope."

Admitting that Mr. Roscoe may not consider these circumstances as an *exclusive* test of Poetry; granting that he is not absurd enough to lay it down as a canon, that *frequency of quotations*, and *application* to *many* purposes, (whatever these *purposes* may be,) are the most decisive proofs of the eminence of a poet in his art; still, in associating the names of Pope and Shakespeare as super-eminently excellent in these requisites, Mr. Roscoe evidently lays great stress on such distinguishing characteristics, claiming for Pope so high a rank, on this account, that Shakespeare can alone be reckoned superior!!

Here then are Mr. Roscoe's distinguishing "proofs of poetry,"—the works of a poet being "*quoted on so many occasions*," and "APPLICABLE "to so many *purposes!*"

These are propositions of our new Stagirite: How accurate are their definitions! how inevitable the conclusions!

Shakespeare, and the admirers of Shakespeare, have reason to thank him, for placing on such immoveable grounds so much of the FAME of that immortal poet.

By "being applicable to so *many purposes*," I will suppose Mr. Roscoe means, so many purposes

of practical wisdom—so many lessons of existing manners! This definition would go a great way to destroy half the delightful imagery, which is Shakespeare's unrivalled characteristic, and cut off such poetical characters as Prospero, Ariel, Caliban, Oberon, Titania, &c. entirely.

I do not know for what purposes of existing manners these characters "*are applicable*," but the creation of one of them would place a poet *higher* in his order than any could be placed, who had no other claim "to the proud distinction of "the sacred lyre," than that his works were "*applicable to many purposes!*"

But we have another resemblance between these two great poets. "They are both frequently "quoted." I do not know that either are more quoted than Joe Miller, no GREAT poet, but a great dealer in the "ludicrous," one of Mr. Roscoe's characteristics of the higher order of poetry!

When Mr. Roscoe speaks of so decided a *test* of poetical pre-eminence as *quotation*, possibly he did not recollect, that granting this new *test* all the infallibility for which he contends, it proves, at least, as much for me as himself; for granting that the passages *most commonly quoted* from Pope are those which are *most poetical*, many other passages, which are no better than *prose*, are also "*quoted.*"

Granting that such passages as the following are on every tongue,

"Oh! happiness," &c.

"Lo! the poor Indian," &c.

"The lamb, thy riot dooms to die to-day,
"Had he thy reason, would he frisk and play?
"Pleas'd to the last he crops the flow'ry food,
"And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood!"

Granting all this, yet how many lines possibly as often quoted from this poem are mere rythmical *truisms;* such as,

"The proper study for mankind is man!" &c.

Does Mr. Roscoe think, if such passages were *quoted* ten thousand times oftener than they are, would prove *them more poetical?*

"Cum ventum ad verum est, sensus, NATURA repugnat."

Sundry other passages, evincing *as much poetry,* and *equal truth,* are not oftener *quoted* than those pithy sentences that form the top lines of a boy's copy-book,

"Avoid bad company,"
"Bounty creates esteem,"

And so on through the alphabet.

One particular line, which Mr. Roscoe may have often heard *quoted,* is a very favourite passage with WRITING-MASTERS! the Dilworths of the age!

"NATURE's chief master-piece is WRITING WELL!"

But I cry Mr. Roscoe's pardon. Shakespeare is excepted, as being alone above Pope according to this infallible test of poetic eminence, namely, *quotation, and* APPLICATION TO MANY PURPOSES!!

Having touched on Mr. Roscoe's *invariable principles* of estimating poetry, let us now bring

under the test of a little logical analysis what he says of "my *detracting*" from Pope's high station as a poet.

"CONSIDERATIONS OF THIS NATURE!" says Mr. Roscoe. Of what NATURE?

"Considerations" that no works are applicable "*to so many purposes*," or are so often "*quoted*," as those of Pope:—"considerations of this NATURE" have not deterred his last editor from "*detracting*," &c. *Roscoe.*

Answer:—*Considerations of another nature* have weighed with the former editor, to place Pope in rank below Milton and Shakespeare, but above Dryden, which is no "*detraction!*"

What Mr. Roscoe precisely means by saying I have assigned Pope, from "*any considerations*,"* an *inferior* RANK! I know not. I say, "that "poetry, as sublime, and of the highest order," can-

* There is a fallacy in the word "*inferior*," which Mr. Roscoe uses indefinitely. I said Pope was of the *second* order, that is, not so high in his art as the highest. Mr. Roscoe calls this "detracting," and placing in an "inferior" rank.—All this is owing to his using a word generally associated with ideas of the lowest kind; whereas my definition made Pope *only below the highest.* I could not exemplify my meaning better than by taking Dr. Johnson's whole list of poets, and my estimate of Pope's rank would run thus—Milton, Pope, Dryden, Gray, Cowley, Waller, Collins, Dyer, &c. down to Blackmore! Pope is *above* all but Milton; and this is Mr. Roscoe's DEGRADING into INFERIORITY!

not be made by any genius, from morals and manners, as from *passions*, and pictures from nature. I appeal to acknowledged poets of the highest rank; and I assert that Mr. Roscoe accuses Dr. Warton and myself wrongfully, when he affirms we have given Pope "an *inferior* rank!" For I ask, is it "inferior" in poetical rank, to be placed, as I have placed Pope, above Ovid, HORACE, Juvenal, or Dryden?

As "quotation" is so distinguishing a test of high rank in poetry, according to Mr. Roscoe's novel and unerring principles, I add one more "*quotation*" from him, whose rank in poetry is ascertained by so infallible a proof—

> "To laugh, were want of decency and grace,
> "But to be grave, exceeds all power of face!!"

Mr. Roscoe proceeds; "The late editors of "Pope, and particularly Mr. Bowles, have at-"tempted to *detract* from the high *reputation* "which he (Pope) has so long enjoyed, and assign "him only an *inferior scale* of poetic excellence!!"

I again answer. It is not inferior to be placed, among Dr. Johnson's English Poets, *next* to Milton, though not of the same flight or wing! Pope is *next*, but far below Milton, if my principles be sound; and infinitely *farther below* that lord of human passions, and sweetest music, and richest enchantment of imagination, Shakespeare; though Mr. Roscoe, in the plenitude of his admiration of

Pope, thinks Shakespeare only his superior, in these great points of true poetry—*quotation and adaptation to many purposes.*

"Dr. Warton informs us, 'that the largest portion of 'the works of Pope is of the didactic, moral, and satiric 'kind, not of the most poetic species!'"—*Roscoe.*

This, in my opinion, is unanswerable; and if it be not true, then, bating the *carminis artem*, Mrs. Glass's Cookery, the Young Man's Companion, and the Tale of a Tub, are poetry; for the one is didactic, the other moral, and the last satirical. But as I am not concerned in defending that which appears to want no defence, I shall proceed with what more immediately concerns myself.

"Mr. Bowles has asserted, that 'all images drawn 'from what is beautiful and *sublime in the works of* 'NATURE, *are more beautiful and sublime than images* 'drawn *from works of* ART.' Whence he contends,"—*Roscoe.*

I must stop Mr. Roscoe here, in the full march of his advance.

According to Mr. Roscoe, Mr. Bowles draws *all* his conclusions from one position. By which it appears that Mr. Roscoe is more conversant with the writings of those who opposed Mr. Bowles, than Mr. Bowles's own critical opinions in the very work which Mr. Roscoe was editing.

Can Mr. Roscoe deny the truth of Mr. Bowles's first position? Can he say that images drawn from *art*

are, abstractedly considered, so poetical as images drawn from what is sublime and beautiful in NATURE? Can he deny the first proposition? In the mean time I will again direct him to the plain substance of my sentences.

"I presume it will be granted that all IMAGES drawn from what is sublime or beautiful in nature, are more *poetical* than any images from *art*.

"IN LIKE MANNER, the PASSIONS of the *human* heart are MORE ADAPTED to the HIGHER SPECIES of poetry, than incidental and transient manners."—*Bowles's Edition of Pope, vol.* 10.

With delightful complacency, Mr. Roscoe, like others, *omits* the latter part of this connected proposition, and directs all his evasive ratiocination against the *first*, which is the least material, and which only concerns *descriptive* poetry.

Mr. Roscoe has examined "*my principles*;" and the reader has seen with what complete fairness! I have already done him far more justice than I have received: I have set before the reader faithful extracts from his *invariable* and *discriminating principles* of poetry, such as "*applications* "*to* MANY PURPOSES," and frequency of "*quota-* "*tions*;" and now follows a summary of Mr. Roscoe's POETICAL OBJECTS.

"The objects" (he says) "presented to us may be *magnificent*, or *terrific*, or *sublime*, or *pathetic*, or *pleas-*

*ing*, or *mournful*, or LUDICROUS; but whether they are *poetical*, or not, must WHOLLY depend on the powers of the artist by whom they are REPRESENTED."

*Answer.* If an object be magnificent or terrific, it is ADAPTED to the higher order of poetry, as it is connected with PASSION. Whether it may be represented adequately, depends on the powers of the poet. *Concessi semper.* "Magnificent "objects" are objects (which is all I contend for) adapted to the highest poetry; but Mr. Roscoe's conclusion is this, that poetry "wholly depending "upon *the powers of the artist*"—the PLEASING, the MOURNFUL, and the LUDICROUS, may equally be made objects of the highest poetry, if the artist has powers so to represent them; and then, that the "pleasing" and the LUDICROUS may become *equally*, and in the same degree, POETICAL, if the *poet* have such GENIUS, that,—like a certain critic, not of the *first order*, Midas,—he might turn every thing he *touched* into gold!!. This is Mr. Roscoe's argument, if it be any thing to the purpose.

That the "ludicrous" is a *province* of poetry, no one denied; and that a most delightful poem may be made of *ludicrous* characters, and objects, and associations, by a poet of wit and humour, no one who has read Hudibras can be disposed to doubt; but that "the ludicrous," by any treatment, can be brought into the highest rank of poetry, that I deny.

Yet who will not rather "hold both his sides" over Hudibras, than be "nodding" over Blackmore! For myself, having been imbued with *other* ideas of poetic criticism, learnt from obsolete guides, *inter sylvas Academi*, I was not aware that the "ludicrous" could be made an object of the highest rank of poetry! If so, then "Ancient Pistol, "and Doll Tear-sheet," may divide the palm, (as far as the HIGHER ORDER of poetry is concerned,) with King Lear and Macbeth!

It was said by Bonaparte, in his fallen fortunes, that there was but a *small* distance between the "SUBLIME and ridiculous!" According to Mr. Roscoe, there is no difference, as far as *either* may be the basis of the HIGHER ORDER of poetry! Mr. Roscoe nearly agrees with the Ex-Emperor, and I should be very sorry, by too strict a comparison, to disturb the tranquillity of *his* critical conviction; but a writer, who differs from Mr. Roscoe as much as I do, has said,

"RIDICULUM acri
"Fortius ac melius magnas plerumque secat res;"
*Horace.*

and there are some arguments which can only be met with—a *smile!*

As to the "pleasing" forming part of great subjects for poetry, I hardly know what the most eminent poet could do, who perversely took a subject that was not "PLEASING!" But if the



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LUDICROUS be a source of the higher order of poetry as much as the "*magnificent*," we might not despair of the time when Harlequin and Columbine, as a "*pleasing*" drama," should vie with Romeo and Juliet; which will be the "Triumph of the FU-"TURE," (to use an expression of the Quarterly Review,) when future LONGINUSES of the new school of criticism shall write treatises on the sublime and pathetic of future Grimaldi's!!

"PROCEED, BLEST DAYS," &c.
*Dunciad.*

A critic might as well have classed together, "among objects of the highest poetry," JUPITER in the "NIGHT of CLOUDS,*" APOLLO descending in glory from Olympus,—and HUDIBRAS's *beard*,

"In shape and cut so *like a tile*,
"At sudden view it would beguile!"

* Media nimborum in nocte.

## LETTER XII.

My Dear Sir,

Having thus discussed preliminaries, and submitted Mr. Roscoe's own principles of poetical criticism to a little *logical* analysis, and pointed out, according to his scale, objects of the *higher order* of poetry, the "sublime," the "terrible," the "magnificent," the "pathetic," the "ludicrous," and the "pleasing;" before I proceed to examine his *examples*, to illustrate these principles, I must detain you a moment longer, whilst I enquire into the truth of what he calls a "fact."

"In fact," he observes, "there is *no poetry* "in *any subject*, except what is called forth by the "genius of the poet!"

*Answer.* *One part* of this proposition is a *mere truism*, namely, that there can be no poetry in any thing, unless there be a poet to call it forth; another part contains as obvious a *sophism:* and the third part I deny.

And first for the truism. A painter cannot paint the most *picturesque* scene without the eye

and the hand of a painter, so a man cannot use the materials of poetry without being a poet. The morning lark would in vain ascend, "leaving its "stream of song"* below, unless a poet felt the beautiful image, and was able to set it before us with the language and in the spirit of a poet.

This part, therefore, of Mr. Roscoe's "fact" is a *truism!* The "sophistry" consists in saying "there is *no poetry* in any subject." This sophistry arises from confounding "poetry" with "adapta-"tion to poetry," which were my words. There is, strictly speaking, "*no poetry* in *any subject*" any more than there is a *tune in my fiddle*, unless you can bring it out. But, my good sir, let me ask in your ear, do you not think there are some subjects more *adapted to* poetry than others? When you say there is no poetry in any thing, I contend, this is false, if "adaptation" to poetry be substituted for the word "poetry." I purposely, and to prevent quibbling, used the very word "adaptation," which you evade by a *sophism.*

With respect to the *fallacy* of your proposition, this, I think, I can as easily prove. For, if one subject were not "MORE ADAPTED" to poetry than another, then Homer could equally shine in any subject he handled. We are moved to tears, and deeply affected, when Hector parts with his child

* A beautiful and novel image, from Irving's Tales of a Traveller.

and Andromache. We follow the old king with beating heart, when he kisses the hands, χειρας ανδροφονυς, of the inexorable Achilles.

And if it be said,

"Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus!"

every heart will answer, it is not in these passages. Why? because they were "MORE ADAPTED TO "POETRY," and found a master worthy "the "*subject.*" Now supposing Homer had never written the Iliad, could he, by his "Battle of the "Mice and Frogs," have attained a rank equal to your own poet? Do you think, if he had described the new quay at Liverpool, this description would have been (to adopt your own criterion of poetry) so often "*quoted*" as the beautiful description which Pope has translated,

"As when the MOON, refulgent lamp of night,
"O'er heav'n's pure azure sheds her sacred light?"

I have touched on this subject before, but I am glad to discuss it with a scholar of Mr. Roscoe's eminence; and if I have, in a subject that is so plain, said any thing he might think trifling, I trust he will not attribute it to disrespect; but some raillery must be excused.

Mr. Roscoe, who has been so animated in defending a poet long since dead, and whose works speak for him, will enter into my feelings, who have to *defend myself*, and am unwilling to go to the grave misrepresented as I have been.

To return: what can we say seriously to arguments like the following?

"The Odyssey is not so sublime as the Iliad; but it cannot on that account be said to be less poetical! Yet, according to the *rule* now attempted to be established, Homer was a poet of the FIRST ORDER when he wrote the Iliad, and only of the second when he wrote the Odyssey!!" *Roscoe.*

*Answer.* Homer was of the first order when he wrote the Iliad, and of the *first order*, when he wrote the Odyssey, according to that "*very rule*" which Mr. Roscoe deems inconclusive.

"Passions" are more concerned in the Iliad—(which poem may, indeed, be called *all passion;*) but the Odyssey abounds with the most striking and beautiful imagery from nature, as well as in PASSIONS.* Both these poems are of the first order of poetry, and the poet of either would be in the *first class.* Homer, if he had written only the Odyssey, would be above Pope; and far *below* Pope, if he had written only the burlesque Battle of the Frogs and Mice; let the genius displayed in these poems be what it may.

* How absurd is Madame de Stael's criticism respecting the division of modern poetry into the *classical* and *romantic!* what ever was more *romantic*, in her sense of the word, than the Odyssey?

"There are no *great* subjects but such as are made so by the genius of the artist," says Mr. Roscoe.

*Answer.* There are many great subjects, whether the artist can use them or no.

"Every nation has its *limbo* of poets, *flentes in limine primo*; whilst, on the other hand, poems on the most unfavourable subjects become, through the mere genius of their authors, engraven on the tablets of immortality." *Roscoe.*

*Mediocribus esse poetis, non dii non homines*, &c. Undoubtedly there are in every nation thousands of these, whether they be described as *flentes* with modern *sonnetteers*, or with more animated enthusiasm blithely invoking the "day-star of liberty"

"O'er the vine-cover'd hills and gay regions of France;"

But we are told by Mr. Roscoe, that "UNFAVOURABLE SUBJECTS for poetry may, THROUGH "THE GENIUS OF THEIR AUTHORS, become" (what? of the highest order of poetry? No!) "may become "engraven on the tablets of IMMORTALITY!" *A la bonne heure!*

As Mr. Roscoe appears to have thrown all his most formidable force of ratiocination into this part of his argument, and seems to consider the various instances he has adduced as most *triumphantly* establishing the fact against me, that the highest order of poetry must depend on the genius of the poet, the SUBJECT being nothing—it is necessary

to recollect and arm ourselves against his HOST of instances.

On these said "*tablets* of immortality," then, (or rather let us, if you please, have a "*pillar*,") where will the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, and the Georgics, be placed? in the first class, with the Iliad and Æneid? No! I imagine, upon second thoughts, you will not contend for this. Then the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, and even the Georgics, must be in the *second* order; for this reason, because their subjects, though treated by the highest genius, place them *below the Iliad* and *the Æneid*, as treated by the same genius.

I have contended this point with a writer far inferior to Mr. Roscoe, but as I am convinced my principles will bear discussion, let them be examined by whom they may, I transcribe the following passage from the collection of all my tracts written on the subject of Pope, published by Hurst and Robinson. I join the BEES and GEORGICS, because they are kindred subjects.

"Virgil, therefore, could give a poetical interest to BEES, &c. Could he do so to the *instrument of art*, employed upon the subject of his poem,—the plough, or any of its *artificial* accessaries? Let the reader see.

'Curvi formam accipit ulmus aratri;
'Huic a stirpe pedes temo protentus in octo,
'Binæ aures, duplici aptantur dentalia dorso.'

Nay, with all the poetry Virgil has thrown on his subject, and that poetry from *nature*, the Georgics would

have lost their most unperishable charm, if he had not shewn in his poem the '*dulcia*' as well as the '*pulchra*,' by the exquisite episode of Orpheus, &c.

'Ipse cava solans ægrum testudine amorem,
'Te, dulcis conjux, te solo in litore secum,
'Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.
'Tænarias etiam fauces, alta ostia Ditis,
'Et caligantem nigra formidine lucum
'Ingressus,' &c.

Who does not almost involuntarily repeat the lines to

'Invalidasque TIBI tendens, heu! non TUA, palmas.
'Dixit, et ex oculis subito, ceu fumus in auras,' &c.

"Need I mention, in farther illustration of the *necessity* of such interspersions in such a work, Aristæus descending into the deep to see his mother the Sea-Nymph—

'Jamque domum mirans genetricis, et humida regna,
'Speluncisque lacus clausos, lucosque sonantes,
'Ibat, et, ingenti motu stupefactus aquarum.'

"Who that reads these passages does not feel it is these images from NATURE, from *external* nature and PASSIONS, that make the Georgics, whatever they may be as a treasise on agriculture, ETERNAL AS A POEM? But still, from the nature of its subject, even this exquisite work must rank in the second order of poetry, whilst the ÆNEID and ILIAD exist."

One word more on the "bees"—an "*unfavourable subject*," of which GENIUS can make a BEAUTIFUL POEM!! Genius cannot make it a poem of the *first order*, which requires MEN and *human passions*, for, although GENIUS can make a

Cæsar as interesting as an Henry or Edward; can genius make *bees* as interesting? no! CHESSMEN?* no! not more than it can turn a *wooden* man into Mr. Roscoe! Can it make such a subject (and Homer and Shakespeare shall jointly hold the pen) of the *higher order of poems?* no! but if Mr. Roscoe does not prove this, what do his "*bees*," as well as all his other instances, prove? Nothing. One answer is an answer to these, and five hundred more such instances.

I shall take the liberty of extracting another passage from the same publication:

"No '*treatment*' can make the bee '*sublime.*' Poetic sublimity is not its character, but poetic *beauty* is;—*inest sua gratia parvis*—a consummate poet avails himself of that *beauty*; so Theocritus,

Ωδε καλον Σαμβινητι ποτι σμαασσι μελισσαι. . .
. . . . . .
Πωτῶντο ξυθαι περι πιδακας αμφι μελισσαι.

'Reluctant comes the timid spring.
'Scarce a bee, on airy wing,
'Murmurs the blossom'd boughs around
'That deck the garden's southern bound."

*Warton.*

From his vagrant labours, his life among the flowers, being associated with the first sunshine of the year, the bee is peculiarly poetical, and its introduction accompanied necessarily with poetical circumstances; but no genius can exalt the BEES into the first rank of poetry."

* See Observations on Vida's Game of Chess.

I have extracted these general observations from a former pamphlet, but have never seen the poem "on the Bees," of which Mr. Roscoe speaks; nor ought we to forget, when on this subject, Mr. Roscoe's own beautiful "Butterfly's Ball!" To proceed:

Let us contemplate a little closer Mr. Roscoe's ARMAMENT of instances! Here they stand: the FROGS of HOMER; the GEORGICS of VIRGIL; the CHESS-PLAY of VIDA; the BEES of RUCELLAI; the SYPHILIS of FRACASTORIUS; the LUTRIN of BOILEAU; the RAPE OF THE LOCK; the SCHOOL-MISTRESS of SHENSTONE; the TASK by COWPER; &c. the HUMOROUS or LUDICROUS compositions of BUTLER and SWIFT!! The humorous and ludicrous, by the bye, Mr. Roscoe puts in their proper place, as every man of sense would do, namely, the *last* in the list; and thus the agile critic *hops* on my side, in an instant, without *thinking* of it!

Among poems of this rank and description, Mr. Roscoe also properly places the Rape of the Lock; but the Rape of the Lock is worth all the rest put together, except the TASK of COWPER, to which I shall devote another letter.

In the mean time it is necessary to put on the whole *panoply* of defensive criticism, when Mr. Roscoe brings his *dumb* warriors all in battle array, on the CHESS-board of VIDA! Yet we might ask, what is the KING of this chequered plain to "ανα ξ ανδρων Αγαμεμνον," or κορυθαιολος Εκτωρ?

The "chess-players" must be placed, with your leave, Mr. Roscoe—however animated the *wooden* warriors may be by the genius of the poet—far below those *living* warriors—they must rank in the *second* order—and that is enough for me, whatever powers may be exerted on so "unfavourable a "subject."

Nor must we leave this important *game* of chess without detaining Mr. Roscoe a little longer at it. I almost fear I shall be able to turn all his *warriors* against himself, as I believe it was thought I did, when Mr. Campbell advanced with Milton's "ADMIRAL'S MAST."*

Let us sit down to the board, good sir, if you are not tired. I apprehend the chief interest given to this "game," *in poetry*, must be derived from the poet animating his *knights* and *kings*, and describing them as if they were real and living heroes; and so far, *pro tanto*, the game of *chess*, deriving some poetical interest from the fiction of *nature*, becomes poetical. This is my first move against Mr. Roscoe; from which it might be conjectured that in the end I shall take captive his knights, bishops, castles, kings, queens, and pawns, and leave him nothing but, perhaps, a solitary "rook," till his army of wooden arguments is, like them, dispersed.

* See Letter to Campbell.

But attend! The "warriors" are now marching and counter-marching to and fro on the board, and the player hangs over it, anxious as if

"Eternity was hung
"Upon the balance of a single pin;" *Cowper.*

yet, after all, the fallacy is too palpable to please long. Fancy may be amused for a while by the ingenuity and art of the poet; but neither Vida, nor all the poets in the world, nor Homer himself, could place such a poem upon such a *subject*, as high in the "tablet of immortality" as an epic poem, whose personages are *flesh* and *blood*. No genius could give living interest to these *wooden* heroes, any more than it could animate and give life and intelligence to the AUTOMATON who played this game in London a few years since.

This is my second *move;* and my third and last is this, which I think will be enough to *win* the game! Supposing Homer could not, with all his genius, make a poem on so "*unfavourable*" a subject so *poetical* as he has made the Iliad and Odyssey, wot you the reason? or do you begin to *think* there may be a reason? I will tell you: because the *subject would not admit of it!* and if the subject would not admit of it, then, I fear, it must be a "*sequitur*," that NO GENIUS of any poet can make that poem of the FIRST ORDER, which is not of itself "adapted to the higher "order of poetry." *Q. E. D.*

Take away the *board and Mr. Roscoe's* CHESS-MEN!!

And now, one parting word on Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice!

I have seen criticisms in the present day, and by learned commentators on the ILIAD, of the FROGS and MICE, which the *Frogs* and *Mice*, if they could *read* and *write*, one should suppose would have disdained to write themselves!!

According to my principles, the *frogs*, being more conversant with *external* nature—water, banks, meadows, &c. as *genuine* poets, would be superior to the mice; but the *mice*, if they could not beat them in subjects "adapted to the *higher* "*order* of poetry," (being more conversant with "in-door nature," like Pope,) would beat their antagonists hollow in the art of *nibbling criticisms!* Respecting the frogs, we might thus, at last, hope to see the Horatian idea inverted, and GENIUS become the most distinguished characteristic of the inhabitants,

"RANARUM in patria;" *Horace.*

while the whole world of *criticism* might be left in quiet possession of the Pternoglyphi,* the *nibblers*, of this enlightened age!

* Pternoglyphus is the Greek name of one of the Mice-heroes—literally, a *bacon-scooper*. See Parnel's translation of Batrachomuomachai.

The question is simply this—whether the "Frogs "and Mice" could have been made by Homer himself to rank as high "on the *tablets of im-* "*mortality*" as the "ETERNAL" Iliad ranks? Unless Mr. Roscoe, by any mode of demonstration, to me unknown, can prove this, all his reasoning is not worth one of the rushes with which the Frogs are armed! He might, indeed, "demonstrate," according to his own critical principles, the poetical importance of the "ludicrous," possibly in this manner: "If *Dr. Syntax*, a "*ludicrous*" poem, be equal to the "School-Mistress," a "*pleasing*" poem, both are equal to "King Lear," a PATHETIC drama! and thus, Shakespeare, Shenstone, and Syntax, may be equally GREAT poets!

But he can never make the Margites, which was a *satire*, or the Bracha-muo-machia,* of the same rank with the Iliad; and if he cannot, with all his powers of RATIOCINATION, (nor Homer himself, with all the *powers of his genius*,) do this, then I opine, these poems, wherever they be placed "in "the *tablets of immortality*," must be placed somewhat *lower* in these tablets than the Iliad or Odyssey; and as they cannot be in the *first* order, they may rank, as Mr. Roscoe pleases, in the *second, third, fourth*, or *fifth*—or fiftieth!

But, without regard to any principles of criticism, I imagine no man of *common* sense will

* Frogs and Mice in Battle.

believe, that in point of *poetical* rank, my opponent can make the *heroes* of the *bacon* and of the *lake* equal to the Heroes of the Iliad, any more than he can make the Author of the Rape of the Lock, (delightful and "*immortal*" as that poem is,) equal in poetical rank to those who gave

"To airy nothing
"A local habitation and a name,"

to Spenser and Shakespeare!!

The "sublime" chorus of "Frogs" in Aristophanes might croak κοαξ, κοαξ, till they burst their lungs, in *critical* contention with the sublimer chorusses of Euripides; and if I could take the liberty of addressing the last editor of Pope as one of the Physignathi* of modern criticism, I would say, as I have done before,

"Non, si te RUPERIS, inquam,
"PAR eris." *Horace.*

* Physignathus, 'one who swells his cheeks.' See Parnel.

## LETTER XIII.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have now shewn how little his Battle of the Frogs can serve Mr. Roscoe. As to such an "unfavourable subject," as "*Siphilis*," I shall say nothing, only recommending the "Nurse" of Transillo* to take care of the poor patient, and the celebrated Doctor SOLOMON, of Liverpool, to write "annotations" on his case!† But in the name of every thing interesting, or affecting to the human heart, what could persuade Mr. Roscoe to class among "unfavourable" subjects, the School-Mistress of Shenstone, the Deserted Village, or the Cotter's Saturday Night? So far from "unfavourable," the subjects seem to me most favourable; but even as to these beautiful and affecting productions, I

* Translated by Wm. Roscoe, esq.

† Shylock himself might well exclaim, not "*a Daniel, a second Daniel*," but "a Solomon, a second Solomon," if any critic could prove the unfortunate youth in the "Siphilis," in point of poetry, to rank with the "*Doctor's* clerk," in the inimitable MERCHANT OF VENICE!!

believe the authors themselves would be somewhat surprised if any critic placed them in the same rank of poetry with Homer's Iliad or Odyssey, or Milton's Paradise Lost, or one of Shakespeare's tragedies; but a school child, and the Cotter with his Bible on a Saturday night, and Villagers expelled the home of their infancy, are not *chess* men, and therefore MORE POETICAL. But if Mr. Roscoe is unfortunate in all his instances, I really shall think that nothing but a wish to *support* my *critical principles*, rather than overturn them, could induce him to appeal to Cowper's Task.

If any poem more than another could prove to a certainty the truth of all my positions, it would be Cowper's Task; and I need not say how highly, how very highly, I estimate that singular and original work. It shall stand in the *highest order*, the very highest order, if Mr. Roscoe chooses it! But why? Because the subject given was a "*sofa?*" To write a poem on such a subject would be to a genuine poet "A TASK" indeed! "A SOFA" is an artificial object, connected with artificial life. And if Cowper could have made "A SOFA," confining himself to that subject, by dint of genius, fit to be placed as a poem, *pari passu*, with any poems, in the *first rank* of poetry, then would I concede the contest. But how much is there of the "sofa" in the "Task?" How restless and uneasy is the poet, till he can get away from

it! When that is once done, how beautiful, how varied, how rich, how clothed with the light and hues of heaven is all the prospect! saddened at times with the gloom of his awful infirmity, but brightening into the sunshine of the most exquisite and living poetry. And whence is this enchantment? Because images drawn from what is beautiful or sublime IN NATURE are more sublime or beautiful than any from *art;* because when ART is rendered poetical, it is from physical relations with *external nature,* as in a sailing ship; or moral associations, as in pyramids, temples, &c.; or scenes and circumstances connected with human passions, as a camp at night, &c.; PASSIONS being more *adapted* to the higher orders of poetry than *manners.* It will recreate the reader, and I am sure the writer, to go out into the fresh air awhile, with this "most musical most melancholy" wanderer—poor Cowper.

He is scarce set down to his "Task" in his little parlour, at Weston, but his impatience to be abroad is manifested.

After the first introductory lines, instead of going on with his subject, "*uneasy*" as the lady on his own settee, he jumps up, and is in a twinkling on the ROCKS WASHED BY THE SEA!

"Time was, when clothing sumptuous, or for use,
"Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
"As yet BLACK BREECHES were not; satin smooth,

" Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile;
" The HARDY CHIEF UPON THE RUGGED ROCK
" WASH'D BY THE SEA, or on the grav'lly bank
" THROWN UP BY WINTRY TORRENTS ROARING LOUD,
" FEARLESS of wrong, repos'd his weary strength."

When he is got off "the Sofa," (the "unfavour-" able" subject of his song,) it would require ten doctors, and a strait waistcoat, aided by the Reverend Mr. Newton, to keep him even in the little parlour, five *minutes;* for thus he bursts away,—

" The SOFA suits
" The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
" Tho' on a SOFA, may I never feel!
" For I HAVE LOV'D THE RURAL WALK thro' lanes
" Of GRASSY SWARTH, close cropt by nibbling sheep,
" And SKIRTED THICK WITH INTERTEXTURE FIRM
" Of thorny boughs; have lov'd the rural walk
" O'er HILLS, thro' VALLIES, and by RIVERS' brink!"

He has scarce written ten lines on this "unfavourable" subject; and we have "rugged "rocks, washed by the sea;" or "gravelly banks, "thrown up by wintry torrents;" and "rural walks, "through lanes of grassy swarth, close cropt b "nibbling sheep;" and "hills, and vallies, and "streams," and all these, *vestibulum ante ipsum primo in limine* of his "Task;" and what have such images to do with the "SOFA?" But he knew the vast variety of the wildest and loveliest prospects FROM NATURE, which he introduced with

no sparing hand, and the tenderest of feelings addressed to the heart, and the most solemn strains of lofty sentiment, or soul-subduing pathos,—he knew that these made poetry of a far more dignified character than the "unfavourable subject" of the Task! and these only will make his name (not the "*Sofa*") engraved as a poet "on the tablets "of immortality."

The Task consists of six books, each book consisting of seven or eight hundred lines: and all he has to say of his "unfavourable subject," is confined to the four first pages; and not more than ten or twenty lines are devoted, in fact, to this "unfavourable subject" at all.

The "SOFA" puts him in mind of those confined to it by "pains arthritic;" but "pains arthritic" he has never known; and "off he goes," through lanes, over hills, through vallies, by rivers' brink, stop him who can; and the "SOFA," from the beginning to the end of the six books of this singular, original, pathetic, but most unequal work, is never once more spoken of.

As I have the poem in my hand, (confining myself to the *first book* only,) let me select a few more of his PICTURES and PASSIONS, that Mr. Roscoe may ponder at leisure on the difference between NATURE and ART, PASSIONS and "*man-*"*ners,*" in poetry; and above all, reflect whether any genius can make those subjects which are *less*

poetical—*less* "adapted to the higher order of "poetry"—as truly poetical in the higher sense of the word, as those which appeal to the PASSIONS, SYMPATHIES, and AFFECTIONS, of the human heart.

I trust when I shall have set a few more passages from the first book only of "THE TASK, (from the very work produced against me!) I shall be considered as having killed not *two* but *three birds* with *one stone!*

"And witness, dear companion of my walks,
"Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
"Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
"Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
"And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—
"Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
"Thou know'st my praise of NATURE most sincere,
"And that my raptures are not conjur'd up
"To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
"But genuine, and art partner of them all.
"How oft upon yon eminence our pace
"Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
"The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
"While admiration, feeding at the eye,
"And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
"Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
"The distant plough slow moving, and beside
"His lab'ring team, that swerv'd not from the track,
"The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy!
"Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
"Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
"Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
"Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
"Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms,
"That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;

" While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
" That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
" The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
" Displaying on its varied side the grace
" Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tow'r,
" Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
" Just undulates upon the list'ning ear,
" Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote."

This is my *first* bird, proving the poetical superiority of outward to "*in-door*" NATURE!

I have transcribed the whole of this delightful passage, but beg Mr. Roscoe particularly to look at that tender trait of domestic purity and affection, with which it commences—

" Witness, thou dear companion of my walks,
" Whose arm this twentieth summer I perceive
" Fast lock'd in mine"—

I ask him whether such a picture of purity, domestic joy, and peace, he can venture to compare with the picture exhibited of the domestic purity of Pope and Martha Blount, after having read one of Pope's letters! This is my *second* bird!

I "*quote*" a yet more exquisite picture, although no scene more poetical than "the *bare common*" form the landscape-part.

" There often wanders one, whom better days
" Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd
" With lace, and hat with splendid ribband bound.
" A serving maid was she, and fell in love
" With one who left her, went to sea, and died.

" Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
" To distant shores; and she would sit and weep
" At what a sailor suffers; fancy, too,
" Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
" Would oft anticipate his glad return,
" And dream of transports she was not to know.
" She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
" And never smil'd again! And now she roams
" The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
" And there, unless when charity forbids,
" The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
" Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
" More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
" A bosom heav'd with never-ceasing sighs.
" She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
" And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
" Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
" Tho' pinch'd with cold, asks never.—KATE IS CRAZ'D."

This is my *third bird*, proving that my ideas in poetry are not confined to "*inanimate objects!*"

Leaving him to his *second thoughts*, I ask the reader whether I have not now killed "three birds "with *one* stone," and that stone from Mr. Roscoe's own *sling!!!*

I might contrast such pictures as these with the satirical daubings of Vinosa, Parson Smug,* &c.; but could Mr. Roscoe seriously imagine that any genius of any poet could exalt such exaggerated caricatures, to place them in the same rank of poetry, even with the delineations, which, warm from the *heart*, and fresh from NATURE, I have

* First volume of Cowper's Poems.

set before him; and these are from the first book only of "*The Task.*"

Few poets, however, have so many readers as Cowper. The religious bigot presses him to his bosom on account of his distempered creed, that horrible creed which preyed on his own heart, which saddened this world, and blasted the hopes of a better. The railing reformer "quotes" him on account of the satirical abuse of the Clergy, Public Schools, and Bishops; the sincerely-pious, for many holy strains of religious dignity and truth; the generous, for his indignation against human wrongs; the patriot, for his majestic scorn of tyranny; but the GENUINE poet, for such passages as I have pointed out, which glow through all the gloom of his heart, and which breathe benevolence, kindness, compassion—yes, and "HOPE," and "CHARITY,"* far more than those poems which are so called. Perhaps the reader will excuse my introducing the following lines on this heart-rending subject of Cowper's malady: they will at least shew I do not confine my own poetry to "inanimate objects."

SWEET bard, whose tones e'en MILTON might approve,
And SHAKESPEARE, from high fancy's sphere,
Turning to the sound his ear,
Bend down a look of sympathy and love;
O swell the lyre again,
As if in full accord it pour'd an angel's strain!
But ah! what means that look aghast,

* Faith, Hope, and Charity, names of poems in the first volume.

E'en while it seem'd, in holy trance,
On scenes of bliss above to glance ?
Was it a FIEND of DARKNESS pass'd!
Oh speak—
Paleness is upon his cheek—
On his brow the big drops stand,
To airy vacancy
He turns the dreadful silence of his eye,
And the lov'd lyre it falls—falls—from his nerveless hand!

*" Come, peace of mind, delightful guest,*
*" O come, and make thy downy nest*
*" Once more on his sad heart ;"**
Meek Faith, a drop of comfort shed;
Sweet Hope, support his aged head ;
And Charity, avert the burning dart!
Fruitless the pray'r—the night of deeper woes
Seems o'er his head e'en now to close;
In vain the path of purity he trod,
In vain,
And pour'd from fancy's shell his hermit strain—
He has no hope on earth—FORSAKE HIM NOT, O GOD.

That Mr. Roscoe, and the ultra-admirers (I might say fanatic idolaters) of Pope, should be anxious to overturn the groundwork of the criterion by which I sought to appreciate, *not to depreciate*, his poetical character, I do not wonder; for if these premises are not founded in truth, there can be no reason given, why Pope, as a poet, should not be classed, as Mr. Roscoe has done, with Shakespeare.

That this should be attempted in so shallow a manner, so disingenuously, so quibblingly, (as I

* From his own affecting hymn.

have often found,) is, I confess, astonishing; more so, that the want of consideration should lead men of literary character to advance instances, which being examined, turn *in my favour*, and *against* those who *advanced* them.

After shewing in what manner all the examples brought against my principles turn *against* Mr. Roscoe, I trust the basis of my argument will be acknowledged, and its "invariableness" proved. I could have formed no idea—though uneducated sciolists and verbal quibblers might argue *superficially* against them—that any well-informed man could deny them, founded, as I believe they are, not only on the *communis sensus criticorum*, but the immoveable basis of common sense.

Yours, &c. &c.

W. L. BOWLES.

## LETTER XIV.

My dear Sir,

I had been almost disposed to throw away the pen from sickening disdain; but I feel somewhat refreshed, as I have no doubt the reader will be, by these quotations from Cowper.

Need I pursue this contest further? Is it possible, I am combating *published* opinions of the Author of the Life of Lorenzo de Medici? It seems to me that such is the strange enthusiasm upon this subject, when the fame of one particular poet appears affected, that it bereaves sensible men of their common understanding.

Mr. Roscoe's arguments, however, may wear a specious appearance to those who have not considered the question attentively; therefore I thus proceed, *ad finem.*

"The question is NOT, then, whether Pope selected the most sublime, the most romantic, &c. but whether he has animated them with the living breath of his own genius." *Roscoe.*

By your leave, THE QUESTION IS, whether Pope has "selected subjects adapted to the higher orders "of poetry," before his station in his art can be assigned. He has selected chiefly those subjects which *no genius*, as I think we have shewn, can raise to the highest order of poetry, any more than the genius of Homer himself could have placed the Margites and Frogs in the *first* order of poems; and if Homer COULD NOT, then I think we may admit, without much irreverence, that his TRANSLATOR COULD NOT, though he may have animated all the subjects he selected "*with the* "*breath of his own genius!!*"

Mr. Roscoe's arguments are triumphantly confirmed by "Rubens' Landscape," as if it was not enough to bring Vida's ivory *knights* in battle array against me! Hear him.

"The finest landscape that Rubens ever painted is of a flat and uniform country in a SHOWER OF RAIN."* *Roscoe.*

So, then, Rubens could make so "unfavourable "a subject" as a *flat country and a shower of rain* the finest of his *landscapes!* My good sir, granting the conclusion, (which I do, *argumenti causa,*) that Rubens has made, out of "a shower

* I have seen this very striking and beautiful picture in the collection of the Gentleman to whom this publication is dedicated. If it is the same, Mr. Roscoe forgets that very "*artificial*" object—*a rainbow!*

"of rain, and a flat country," his *finest* landscape, what follows? Why, that it would be his *finest landscape!* But would it place him so high in the illustrious rank of the greatest painters as his own "Taking down from the Cross," at Antwerp? and *if it did*—if it were *a proof* that it would place Rubens above all *other painters*, of whatever rank in their art, it would then follow, that you yourself would be the most successful pleader for "*inanimate subjects*," as you have been a pleader for *wooden* men!

It only remains for me, in conclusion, to examine that "note upon note," (I mean, Mr. Roscoe's "note upon *my* note,") on the Rape of the Lock.

"Is, then, Pope," says Mr. Roscoe, "to be DEGRADED to a *secondary* rank."

*Answer.* No one can be degraded from a rank which he never occupied. It is not to be degraded to be placed *second* to Milton, though not of the same order in poetry.

"It *is not because he has been* FOUND unequal to any subject he has ATTEMPTED!"

*Answer.* He has been found *unequal* in lyric poetry, and in descriptive scenes from nature, the noblest kind of descriptive poetry; he has never "*attempted*" the highest order of poetry, epic or dramatic.

"From the sublime strains of the Messiah?" *Roscoe.*

*Answer.* What portion do these "sublime "strains" fill of his poetry? and at best they are but dilutions from a POET infinitely greater., whose "lips, indeed, were touch'd with hallow'd fire."

"The deep pathos of Eloisa"— *Roscoe.*

*Answer.* Granted: and when was the deep pathos ever denied? But is pathos Pope's general character, or is the Epistle of Eloisa to be compared with the tragedy of Lear, to say nothing of want of *invention?*

"To the keen satire of the Dunciad, and the sportive *pages* of the Rape of the Lock." *Roscoe.*

*Answer.* All that can be said of the "*keen* "*satire*" of the Dunciad, with exception of the beastly sports, admitted. Of the Rape of the Lock, I could criticise the critic for speaking so coldly of the most fanciful and exquisite composition of the kind the world ever saw, instead of designating it by the "sportive *pages* of the Rape of the Lock!"

"Because he has not undertaken some work of a higher"— *Roscoe.*

Partly because he has not undertaken, and partly because he had not succeeded when he did; for there is no one, I should suppose, who would not pronounce his Ode to Cecilia a failure.

And now to put on our "*steel cap*" again!

"As if," says Mr. Roscoe, "as IF any works could be of higher order than those which announce the awful *predictions* of futurity, and the sacred mysteries of religion!"

*Answer.* "As IF" a few passages from Isaiah's sublime prophecy put into an *eclogue* of about fifty lines, and forming not one thousandth part of the works of the author, should entitle him to the character of a poet, rapt in the "*awful* "*predictions* of FUTURITY," and the sacred mysteries of religion; of which sacred mysteries neither his vindictive satire, or his rank indecencies, shew much sense!!

"Which awaken the tenderest sympathies of the human heart." *Roscoe.*

As far as this has been done in the Eloisa, and in the verses to Lord Oxford, and some exquisite passages, the "tenderest sympathies" have never been denied; but all we say is, this is not enough to constitute a general character for a poet in rank "of *the highest order*," seeing his general character is *didactic*, *moral*, and *satirical*, not *pathetic* or *sublime*.

"Which embody and bring before us the liveliest pictures and most faithful representation of real life." *Roscoe.*

*Distinguo*—

"I give and I devise, Old Euclio said,
"And sigh'd, my lands and tenements to Ned;
.....
"Tom struts a soldier, open, bold, and brave;
"Will sneaks a scrivener, an exceeding knave."

These are among the "*lively pictures and faith-*"*ful representations of real life!*"

Are such representations of real life, in point of poetry, to be classed with such representations as Ariel, &c. which are *not* in "REAL life;" or as Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet, or Othello, which are vivid and "faithful *representations*" of the passions of the human heart, not as they exist in every-day life, but as they exist in the human heart, of all times.

"Which correct and discountenance vice and folly by the just severity of satire, or which instruct or amend the heart by lessons of morality and wisdom." *Roscoe.*

I am sorry to dissect, in a very few words, so fine a piece of penmanship; but the last clause is "*begging* the question," which I deny. Exquisite satires may be written to "*discountenance* "*vice and folly* with *due severity;*" but I deny that they, being written how they may, entitle the writer to rank with him,

"Whose eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
"Glances from earth to heaven;"

or with him, who, in his immortal poem, has caught a strain from the Heaven of heavens, and embodied

"The bright pomp ascending jubilant."

Lessons of wisdom, morality, and truth! The highest wisdom, the purest morality, the sublimest truth, may be learned from such poetry, better than from any of Pope's representations of "*real* "*life*;" and, therefore, if morality be poetry, this *morality* is as much superior to Pope's, as the *poetry!*

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In this examination of Mr. Roscoe's arguments, I have spoken, as I have always done, with plainness, and, I hope, without having misrepresented a single sentiment of my opponent—I am sure I should disdain the thought of doing it by wilful and deliberate perversion. Nor have I sought a momentary apparent triumph by scrutinizing verbal inaccuracies, and imputing variation of sentiments to mere difference of language, when the sentiments are *substantially* the same!

In this answer I have chiefly confined the contest to two points—one, the duplicity connected with the publication of Pope's letters; and the other, his station AS A POET.

With respect to the Letters, if this one piece of master-duplicity be proved, I shall not repeat Mr. Roscoe's own words, but appeal to all dispassionate judges, whether, in what I have said, I have been unnecessarily severe.

As to Pope's station among the *first* poets, Mr. Roscoe, except in the instances of not giving my sentiments fairly, has met the question with decision. He at once claims for him, on account of his genius, and without regard to the nature of his subjects, the same rank with those masters of the magic song, who gave to

"Airy nothing a local habitation and a name"—

SPENSER and SHAKESPEARE!!

I have met him on this subject as fairly; I have tortured no words to give a meaning the author would disavow; I have set the passages I answered, before the reader, in his own words; and I trust even Mr. Roscoe himself will pardon that degree of raillery which was almost inseparable from some parts of the subject. His propositions have been met with the plain discussion of a man of sense, not with sophisms; and the result is before the public, to the well-informed part of which I appeal, without much fear.

I do not wish to press the advantage Mr. Roscoe's own arguments have given me farther than *self-defence* requires; and though he has spoken

with apparent respect of the person who, *proving nothing* in favour of Pope, proved only his own intemperance; notwithstanding this, I should almost wish this defence forgotten, rather than I would disturb the tranquillity of a good man, in the evening of his literary retirement; and if in the course of self-defence, I may have done unintentional violence to his feelings, I shall retire from the contest, and even from what I believe will be considered a triumph, with regret.

I have now examined the chief of Mr. Roscoe's arguments which most materially affect the opinions I before advanced as editor of Pope's Works, and leaving the judgment to the sound opinion of the literary public, I remain, with unaltered regard,

Yours, &c.

W. L. BOWLES.

## LETTER XV.

*Nov.* 20, 1824.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WRITE one more letter, as you have thought it advisable that I should more definitively explain my sentiments on one point.

"There are none *so blind* as those who will "*not* see." I know not how it is possible to put the subject of discussion in a clearer light than I have done already: nevertheless, to avoid every thing on which even the slightest *cavil* may be *hitched*, I shall devote this last letter to the part of our correspondence, which you seem to think requires a somewhat more distinct discrimination.

You allude to that passage of Mr. Roscoe's criticism, in which he affirms, that, according to "my "principles of poetry," the Odyssey being in its general character *less sublime* than the Iliad, it ought to be placed, *me judice*, in the *second* order of *poems!!*

In answer to this, I think I cannot do better than prove, that, though the Odyssey may be thought *less* characteristically sublime than the Iliad, it is, as an epic poem, of the most original description, to be placed in the FIRST ORDER, among the highest works of poetry in the world, together with the Iliad; and even Mr. Roscoe himself, I should imagine, would grant this, when I shall shew that the Odyssey most clearly illustrates all *my* principles of poetry, and equally embraces his own —being at once *sublime, magnificent, pathetic, mournful, terrific,* PLEASING, and LUDICROUS; and more than this, being *didactic, moral,* and *satirical!!*

For it is "SUBLIME," in that it shews us the most sublime object in the world, according to Seneca, "*Ecce spectaculum dignum, et quod respiciat intentus operi suo, Deus! Ecce par Deo, dignum, VIR fortis cum malâ fortunâ compositus!*" The sentiment applied to Cato might be applied to Ulysses!

It is "magnificent," for it displays the wildest and richest scenery by sea and land. It is "PATHETIC," for how affecting is the picture of the desolate widow, weeping over her husband's bow! How *pathetic* the circumstance of the chief, an exile and unknown, weeping at the "Tale "of Troy divine," remembering his day of prosperity, when in this glorious contest

"Pars magna fuit!"

What is more *pathetic* than the *dog*, remembering his old master, and dying at his feet? What more "*mournful*" than the whole story of woe? what more "*pleasing*" than the filial affection of Telemachus? what more "*didactic*" than the admonitions of Minerva? what more "*moral*" than the young man's being *lighted to bed*, not by the beautiful damsels, Penelope's maids of honour, but his *father's old nurse?**

Here are for Mr. Roscoe the "sublime," the "magnificent," the "pathetic," the "mournful," the "pleasing," "the moral, and didactic," all in one! So the Odyssey may well hold up its head, without any fear of being placed by me, or any one, in the *second order* of poetry; it contains, moreover, another of Mr. Roscoe's requisites—the *ludicrous*; for what can be more *ludicrous* (I had almost said *farcical*) than the Cyclops' answer to his gigantic brethren, that "*No-man*" slays him? and further, it is *satirical*, for what can be more satirical than the "*manners*" of the SUITORS?

I will add, that it not only contains all these ingredients of poetry, which accord with my principles of criticism, and Mr. Roscoe's *own*, but as a poem of the highest order, evinces as much power of invention, as much skill in the developement of the fable, as much richness of description,

* Book the First.

as much variety in its incidents, as the Iliad; and it displays, at the same time, wild and romantic imagery, beyond any poem of antiquity.

I had almost forgotten the "terrific:" and, therefore, need only point to the "*terrific*" Cyclops, and the abode and incantations of Circe.

Nor must we forget those more peculiar proofs of the *highest poetry*, on which Mr. Roscoe seems chiefly to depend, and which distinguish POPE no less *than* SHAKESPEARE, namely, representations of "*real life*," and frequency of "*quotation!*"

Now the Odyssey in this respect, I should imagine, might compete with the works of Pope or Shakespeare. As to "*representations* of *real* "life," we have, in the Odyssey, both *high* and *low* life, represented *ad vivum*, by the *fashionable* and dandy suitors of Penelope; and the *boxing-match* with the beggar Irus,* even Squire Hayne, or Pierce Egan, might approve!

If "*quotation*" be demanded as the most infallible proof of poetical supremacy, I should be glad to know what passage is more frequently on every tongue than those expressive words which I have adopted as a motto to these pages, in answer to the Νεστορα διον of controversial criticism,

Τον δ' απαμειβομενος ! !

Notwithstanding this invariable *test* of poetical

* Book the Eighteenth.

eminence, and though I am willing to pay every possible deference to Mr. Roscoe's *principles of poetry*, I have some doubts whether the "*repre-*" "*sentations* of *real* life," such as I have spoken of, or the frequency of "*quotation*,"—(no words in the Odyssey or Iliad being more "*quoted*" than my motto!)—whether the consideration of these circumstances would induce any critic in the whole world, except Mr. Roscoe, and a few others of this "*enlightened* age," to consider such poetical parts of the Odyssey as characterising its high rank equally with PICTURES and PASSIONS, some of which I have set before the reader. But this I will admit, that, whatever may be the circumstances that have occasioned it, the Odyssey and the Iliad, as poems, will rank highest in the "tablets of immorta-" "lity" amongst the immortal works of man, notwithstanding such poems exist as the CHESSMEN, and Mice and Frogs!!

As Lord Byron lays a great stress on a happy motto, I have not only given a "*quotation*" from the Iliad, but added another motto, with its translation from a "sublime and beautiful work," called "Homer's Travestie!!"

The "ludicrous," according to Mr. Roscoe, may be classed among the highest objects of poetry, and, therefore, the Travestie may undoubtedly be ranked as high in the art as Pope's *mistaken* version, turning Homer into a *serious* epic!

The motto to this "ludicrous" version, with its translation, as there found, I have adopted as the most appropriate *motto* to this part of my answer.*

This very "*ludicrous*" Travestie might be adduced itself as a most triumphant proof of the soundness of Mr. Roscoe's criterion of poetry! The travestier conceives that it is a palpable mistake to suppose Homer wrote his great poems *seriously*,—he considers that they are "ludicrous," not "SUBLIME" poems. Be this as it may, as the translators, Pope and the Travestier, equally shine in their respective poetical characters, and as Mr. Roscoe will doubtless think the "ludicrous" translator not much inferior, in point of poetical imagery, to the serious translator; I shall set before the reader, first, Pope's translation of a passage, in which Homer has sought to *ennoble* ART by an illustration from NATURE. I allude to the helmet of Diomed, in the fifth book, which I instanced against Lord Byron's "*profound*" criticisms, on the subject of Homer's weapons.

The passage is thus *seriously* translated by Pope:

"But Pallas now Tydides soul inspires,
"Fills with her force, and warms with all her fires;
"High on his helm *celestial lightnings* play,
"His beamy shield emits a *living* ray;
"The unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
"*Like the red star that fires the autumnal skies!*"

* See title-page.

Now remark the same imagery in the "ludi-"crous" order:

"And now this scrambling, kicking jade,
"By poets call'd the Martial Maid,
"Finding the fray would soon begin,
"Gave Diomed a *dram of gin!*
"And then, before she let him leave her,
"She *stuck* a *candle* in his *beaver!*"

Homer seemed to think "the red star that "fired the autumnal skies" more poetical than a "candle;" but probably this was before the invention of *wax-lights!!*

But it is time to lay down the pen. Horace has said, (and the defender of the "*ludicrous,*" as an essential of the highest order of poetry will *appreciate* the passage,)

"Nunc itaque et versus et cætera *ludicra* pono:
"Quid verum atque decens cupio et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum."

A resident Clergyman of the Church of England has far more important avocations than criticisms, and at the time of life when such studies (though they may never cease to be *oblectamina)* ought to lose their primary interest, he feels, as the sands of the hour are passing, how much less, in a christian sense, such studies deserve attention, when they are mixed it may be said, perhaps, with something like uncourteous retort.

But he who can say, "prior invasit," has some excuse; and I trust, if the reader should think I have perfectly made out my case, he will not attribute my future silence (unless Mr. Roscoe chooses to discuss the question further) to *want* of arguments, but will generously give me credit, from the defence I now make, for that which I *might* make, against my future opponents, and also against other arguments, of which I have taken no notice.

Believe me, "*dum spiritus regit artus*,"

Yours, &c. &c.

## LETTER XVI.

MY DEAR SIR, *Nov. 5*, 1824.

HAVING paid so much attention to Mr. Roscoe, I feel obliged unexpectedly to resume my pen, in consequence of what I have just met with, as the last recorded sentiments, on this subject, of a late illustrious antagonist, now no more.

You have doubtless read (what every body reads) Lord Byron's "*Conversations,*" published by a *noble Captain*, for the benefit of his countrymen, or rather *countrywomen!!*

These "Conversations" are not—according to a facetious expression of our hospitable acquaintance, ("*as my friend Horace says,*")

"Divitiis homines, an sint VIRTUTE, beati;"

nor

"De omnibus rebus;"

yet certainly

"De *quibusdam* aliis;"

with what delicate and honourable feelings, either

in his Lordship or his *reporter*, I will not enquire. I see no reason, however, why his Lordship should have all the conversation to himself, particularly when the writer of these letters is the subject.

In these "Conversations" "self" is the "great "sublime" that is drawn; and to this topic succeeds an estimate of contemporary and literary characters, who are either derided or praised. Among these my humble name is not forgotten; and as *one* conversation (or rather "monologue," consisting only of Lord Byron's αυτος εφη) relates to my principles of criticism, if I take this only opportunity I may ever have of making a very few remarks, I trust I shall be pardoned.

I should not have thought of doing this, or of giving myself the smallest concern about the matter, (however "waspish" or "jealous" I may be,) if I had not at this very time been occupied in writing on that subject, which Lord Byron assures the Captain he had "set to rest!"

But, first, (having done the same in extracts from Mr. Roscoe,) I shall transcribe the passage relating to myself, not much fearing to be brought on the stage, as Lord Byron has described me.

"Bowles is one of the same little order of spirits, who has been fussily fishing on for fame, and is equally waspish and jealous. What could Coleridge mean by praising his poetry as he does?

"It was a mistake of mine about his making the woods of Madeira tremble, &c.; but it seems that I might have told him that there were no woods to make tremble with kisses, which would have been quite as great a blunder.

"I met Bowles once at Rogers's, and thought him a pleasant gentlemanly man—a good fellow for a parson. When men meet together after dinner, the conversation takes a certain turn. I remember he entertained us with some good stories: the reverend gentleman pretended, however, to be much shocked at Pope's letters to Martha Blount.

"I set him and his invariable principles at rest. He did attempt an answer, which was no reply; at least nobody read it. I believe he applied to me some lines in Shakespeare. A man is very unlucky who has a name that can be punned upon; and his own did not escape. I have been reading Johnson's Lives—a book I am very fond of. I look upon him as the profoundest of critics, and had occasion to study him when I was writing to Bowles."—*Captain Medwin's Conversations.*

We find, by this account, that Lord Byron's letter, addressed to certain *** *******, on the edition of Pope by the Reverend W. L. Bowles, was "*answered*, but the answer was no reply!" The Captain probably made a trifling mistake: Lord Byron's words might have been, "the reply "was no ANSWER."

Whether my answer was "no reply," or "my "reply no answer," Lord Byron assures the Cap-

tain "that at least it was not read." Mr. Murray can best "*answer*" this.* I know that the first impression was sold almost as soon as it arrived in London; it was reprinted in the Pamphleteer; another impression was sold, and a third published, including all I had written in the controversy with Lord Byron, Mr. Campbell, and the Quarterly Reviewer, on the subject of these letters.

My answer to Lord Byron had probably nearly as many readers as "the letter" which occasioned it; and I feel equally confident, that in the judgment of all who weighed the arguments on both sides dispassionately, I, and not his Lordship, had "set "the question to rest"—that question, whether the *arts of man*, or the WORKS OF GOD, furnish the loftiest materials for poetry! This was simply the question between us, detached from its connection with the poetical character of Pope; and though Lord Byron did not enter into the contest without the armour of Dr. Johnson, I think these pages will prove he has not "*set the question at rest.*"

As Lord Byron professedly, "when he wrote "to Bowles," consulted Johnson's criticisms, did the following remarks escape him? "I am now "to consider Paradise Lost, a poem, which, con- "sidered, with respect *to design*, may claim the "first place, and with respect to performance, the

* As he has most satisfactorily done in regard to himself.

"second, among the productions of the human "mind."—"His SUBJECT is the fall of worlds, "the REVOLUTIONS of HEAVEN and EARTH," &c.* So that he must have found, from the critic whom he calls "the most *profound*," that there was not much difference in our ideas of the requisites to establish the rank and excellence of a poet—a great SUBJECT, and *powers* of performance.

But, after all, it was a part, and the smallest part, of "the invariable principles," which Lord Byron thought he had "set at rest." It required more strength than he had, and I think I may add, than the author of the Life of Lorenzo de Medici has, to "*set them at rest!!*"

To proceed: whoever were the *readers* of my "Answer to Lord Byron," that he had not *read* it himself, when this conversation took place, must be obvious; for he says, "he *believes* I quoted "Shakespeare!" If *he* had *read* my answer, he would not have *forgotten* that I quoted—*not Shakespeare*—but POPE!

He would not have *forgotten*, when his subject was the support of ART in opposition to the most sublime and beautiful imagery of NATURE, that my quotation was taken from a song by his favourite "*ethic*" poet, written in *ridicule*, and under the character, of a PERSON OF QUALITY!

* Johnson's Life of Milton.

He would not have *forgotten* the first stanza of this SONG,

*Song by a Person of Quality.*

"Flutt'ring spread your purple pinions,
"Gentle Cupid, o'er my heart,
"I a slave in your dominions,
"NATURE MUST give way to ART!"

He would not have *forgotten* this; nor, when he says, "my name was liable to a pun," (and therefore pleasantly applieth the motto,

"I'll play at Bowls,")

would he have *forgotten* that the motto to the answer of him with whom he condescended to play was,

"He who plays at '*bowls*' must expect *rubbers*."*

I believe he would not have "*forgotten*" sundry other points in the discussion, if he had read my pamphlet before this conversation about it took place.

Now I have undeniable evidence, that, after Lord Byron HAD READ my answer, he expressed himself in a letter to a friend, of which an extract was sent to me, in far more flattering terms than when

* An epigram appeared in the public prints, which I here add:

"No more at 'Bowls' let Byron play,
"Or beat old 'Bowls' about;
"For Bowles has fairly won the day,
"And 'bowl'd' his Lordship out."

he pronounced me a "GOOD FELLOW FOR A "PARSON!" The extract from this letter, copied from his own hand-writing, was sent to my brother-in-law;* and this circumstance might be opposed to the Captain's "report," if I were not equally indifferent to such praise or blame.

"A little spirit *fussing* after fame" might reply, if it were worth while, that it is some "*fame*" to have beaten Lord Byron on any question; it is greater "*fame*" to be associated, as he has himself associated me, with such *little* "spirits as Words-"worth and Southey;" it is—if any "*fame*" can be greater—a greater "*fame*" not to be classed in taste or genius with some of those whom he admitted to his intimacy. May I venture to add, it was, I hope, some "*fame*," when the public ear was wearied with the eternal *drone* of Hayley's *couplets*, &c. to have struck *one chord*, however weak, to which Coleridge, Southey, and even Wordsworth, in their days of rising fame, did not disdain to attend!

Coleridge and Southey have publicly testified this: Southey in an article in the Quarterly Review, and Coleridge in his Life and Poems. I may, I trust, without boasting, oppose this testimony to that of Lord Byron "wondering" what Coleridge "could "see in my poems!" Mr. Coleridge spoke in the warmth and honesty of his heart, and I here thank

* Rev. Mr. Wake, rector of Wallop, Hants, from one of Lord Byron's executors.

him and Mr. Southey, whether their praise may be deserved or not; but this I trust I may also say, that at least there is nothing in my poetry deserving that which Lord Byron has thought right to append to it, namely, "*the cap and bells of folly.*"

Some verbal inadvertencies deservedly subjected the writer, then in early youth, to criticism; and a misprint of a word in one passage *(in* for *ere)* unluckily produced nonsense, and therefore I will *not* say, that, if for my "Morning Bells" I deserve the *cap*, Moore deserves something like the same appendage for his *affecting* "Evening Bells;" but the sentiments, at least, are not very dissimilar, and, in fact, the feelings excited by such sounds and associations *must* be nearly the same in every one who has an *ear* or *heart.*

"Fas est et ab *hoste* doceri!" I take this opportunity of correcting the composition alluded to, as I would wish it to stand:

*Bowles's* MORNING *Bells.*

How sweet the Bells ring out their matin peal!
As when, at early dawn, the vernal breeze
Comes gently o'er the breast of pale disease,
So soothing to my heart their sounds I feel!
And hark! with lessening cadence now they fall,
And now, along the white and level tide,
They fling their melancholy music wide;
Bidding me many a tender thought recal
Of summer-days, and scenes of early years,
When by my native streams, *ere* life's fair prime,
Like some strange magic, their melodious chime,
First heard, awoke my childhood into tears!

I hear them now, like sounds of yesterday,
Pass'd, with the sunshine of that morn, away.

Now let us hear the "Evening Bells" of Moore; who, whatever may be the faults of some of his writings, is as amiable and irreproachable in private life, as he is distinguished by genius.

"Those Evening Bells, those Evening Bells,
"How many a tale their music tells
"Of youth and home, and that sweet time
"When last I heard their soothing chime!" *Moore.*

A beautiful idea from Shakespeare on this subject might, I fear, be applied to my late opponent,

"Oh! what a noble mind was there o'erthrown,
"Like *sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.*"
*Hamlet.*

May I further be indulged in offering some remarks on the animated satire—"English Bards "and Scotch Reviewers"—as far as it affects the writer of these pages? Lord Byron has given up the nonsense attributed to me, of making the woods of Madeira "*tremble to a kiss!*" but he holds me up to derision, for that

"In *sighing winds* I seek *relief*,
"Or *consolation* in a *yellow leaf*;"

and because my

"Muse facetious tells
"Of the *sad* sound of Oxford's *merry* bells."

I therefore copy some passages from my poems, that the reader may form his own opinion of the

*justice* of his Lordship's satire. His allusion to *sighing winds* refers, I imagine, to the following sonnet:

THERE is strange music in the stirring wind,
When low'rs th' autumnal eve, and all alone
To the dark wood's cold covert thou art gone,
Whose ancient trees on the rough slope reclin'd
Rock, and at times scatter their tresses sear.
If in such shades, beneath their murmuring,
Thou late hast pass'd the happier hours of spring,
With sadness thou wilt mark the fading year.

The "yellow leaf" is meant, I presume, to ridicule the subjoined extract from the Monody at Matlock:

The LEAVES, O DERWENT! on thy bosom still
Oft with the gust now fall—the season pale
Hath smote with hand unseen the silent vale,
And slowly steals the verdure from the hill—
So the fair scene departs, yet wears awhile
The lingering traces of its beauteous smile:
But we who by thy margin stray, or climb
The cliff's aërial height, or join the song
Of hope and gladness amidst yonder throng,
(*"Losing the brief and fleeting hours of time,"*)
Reck not how AGE, e'en thus, with icy hand,
Hangs o'er us—how, as with a WIZARD'S WAND,
YOUTH blooming like the spring, and roseate mirth,
To slow and sear consumption he shall change,
And with invisible mutation strange,
Wither'd and wasted send them to the earth;
Whilst hush'd, and by the mace of ruin rent,
SINKS THE FORSAKEN HALL OF MERRIMENT![*]

But my Oxford Bells make his Lordship most merry:

[*] "Forletten halls of merriment." *Chatterton.*

"The sad sounds of Oxford's merry Bells."

My lines are these:

I never hear the sound of thy glad Bells,
OXFORD! and chime harmonious, but I say,
(Sighing to think how time has worn away)
"Some spirit speaks in the sweet tone that swells,
"Heard after years of absence, from the vale
"Where *Cherwell* winds." Most true it speaks the tale
Of days departed, and its voice recalls
Hours of delight and hope in the gay tide
Of life, and MANY FRIENDS NOW SCATTER'D WIDE
BY MANY FATES. ———

As Lord Byron has done me the honour of classing "children" among my admirers, I take the liberty, also, of adding the following picture —that of a *child;* and I appeal to all, *except children*, how far I may deserve his lofty and lordly sarcasm.

Oh! helpless INFANCY! if aught could move
The hardest heart to pity and to love,
'Twere surely found in thee: dim passions mark
Stern manhood's brow, where age impresses dark
The stealing line of sorrow; but thine eye
Wears not distrust, or grief, or perfidy:—
Though fortune's storms with dismal shadow low'r,
Thy heart nor fears, nor feels, the bitter show'r;
Thy tear is soon forgotten; thou wilt weep,
And then the murmuring winds will hush thy sleep,
As 'twere with some sad music;—and thy smiles,
Unlike to those that mask oft cruel wiles,
Plead best thy speechless innocence, and lend
A charm might win the world to be thy friend!*

These lines were lately published in the London Magazine, the name of the writer being *ingenuously* suppressed !*

I confine myself entirely to what is public ; and I hope that my remarks will be considered as equally remote from vain boasting as from unmanly complaint.

I never detracted from Lord Byron's impassioned poetry, though, in common with thousands, I have lamented its application ; nor will I utter a word, except of regret, over his tomb; but as to *fame*, whatever mine may be, I would prefer it (with all his genius) infinitely to *his ;* and I will conclude in the words of his favourite poet,

"Oh! grant an HONEST FAME, or GRANT ME NONE!"
*Pope.*

To be "*waspish*" is, I apprehend, to *attack others wantonly ;* to be *jealous*, as an author, is to

"Turn pale,
"And sicken, even if a friend prevail."

..... "De SE
"Fabula narratur!"—

The only "waspishness" to which I can plead guilty is, that, when unjustly loaded with the foulest

* The earliest edition of my poems having been long out of print in London, and a few copies only remaining in the hands of the Printer of this pamphlet, a selection, with other poems, will be published in one small volume.

imputations, I have replied with manliness to such false accusations. To the "wasps" that have attacked me wantonly, I have sometimes given a flap. But "ten years went down" on the most wanton aggression, when it was said that I

"Reviv'd forgotten LIES, and added my own!"

Considering the writer of this *liberal* and gentlemanly description as having commenced the attack, and as he has been, probably, the cause of my being honoured by Lord Byron's notice, I parodied some of his Noble Friend's lines, with a personal application, which lines had been so repeatedly, and, as it were, with smiling satisfaction, quoted against myself. I then took upon me to give one *slap* in return, as if to ask those who *begun first*, how they liked it.*

* In the collected volume of my Pope Controversy, (third edition,) I ordered the passage to be *cancelled;* and having done that, and not before, I offered the hand of forgetfulness and kindness, which those who threw the *first* stone, and who speak loudest of the *rights* of *discussion* and the freedom of the press, were too angry to accept!

When it is recollected that merely on account of my opinions of Pope I have been called "*designing*," hypocritical, "envious," "*malignant*;" have encountered the falsest charges and the grossest personalities; have been stigmatized as the "Clerical Prig,"—the Lord Hervey of the nineteenth century!—a sympathetic deplorer over a *dead Schoolmaster*, (Dr. Warton,)—as a "toad-eater" of the great,—and as a "rich Rector," neglectful of the poor—what man, with the heart of a man, (conscious that I might

In taking leave of this subject, though I feel of how little importance it is, compared with higher avocations and more serious views, whatever may be thought of this defence of the highest works of poetic imagination, and the majesty of "SACRED "SONG," it will be to me a matter of self-gratification, that, from the time in early life, when first, in a distant land, and under bereavement of heart,

"Hæc incondita mecum
"MONTIBUS et SYLVIS," jactabam,

to the present hour, in which I am bidding, perhaps, Μακρὰ χαίρε to poetry and criticism, I have never debased either by making one subservient to immorality, or the other to affectation and bombast. The poetry, be it what it may, I learned in that ACADEMIA, where, also, I learned those principles of criticism, which I have here supported, and which I have no fear as to being "set to rest," by Lord Byron, Mr. Roscoe, or any one, believing

as well have been called Jack the Painter, and accused of setting fire to the dock at Portsmouth,) would not say,

"Semper ego auditor tantum?"

This was the cause (of which Mr. Roscoe has said nothing) of my writing the *satirical* lines he has quoted. I wrote this satire literally *currente calamo*, and merely asked my calumniator, as he did not like, what he called, "my gentyl verses," how he liked those of a different character!

them to be as invariable as NATURE, as eternal as TRUTH.

With respect to my late illustrious antagonist now more, I shall only say,

"His faults rest with him in the grave,
"Nor be remember'd in his EPITAPH."*

I am, &c.

W. L. BOWLES.

* It were, indeed, devoutly to be wished, that some of his Lordship's writings might be also *quietly* "in-urn'd," which, long after the author is dust and ashes, will survive, it is feared, to influence every rising generation, and particularly the noble youth in the same illustrious rank with himself, unless the circumstances which caused him to lose his *caste* and that rank in the front of British society, should operate as a warning.

Whilst writing this note, I have met with some observations so truly excellent and just, on the same subject, that I am tempted to transcribe them :

"It is perfectly well known, that in England society in "high life is divided into classes, as distinct and separate "from each other as any two *castes* can well be. With "the one, the BEST MANNERS AND MINDS are cherished "in the most graceful excellence—DOMESTIC VIRTUE, "COMBINED WITH ALL THAT IS ELEGANT, GENTLE, AND "BENEFICENT, AS FAIR AND FREE FROM STAIN AS "HABITUAL HONOUR, IN ITS HIGHEST ACCEPTATION, "CAN IMPLY. To this class Lord Byron had NOT access." —*Blackwood's Magazine for November*, 1824.

## POSTSCRIPT.

There are two kinds of opponents who cannot be answered,—those who think a case is established by mere reviling and attributing base motives, of which they must be conscious themselves, or they would not attribute them to others;—and those who think they gain a triumph by *confounding*, when they cannot confute, and quibbling *on words*, when they cannot answer arguments.

In the last tirade against me a long and elaborate letter is published, which only shews how a a man is reduced to attempt to eat his own words!

I therefore have no hesitation to print the entire letter from the unfortunate Mr. Scott,* which has been often alluded to, as those who have read the letter published by my coarsest opponent might impute to me a want of veracity.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE hurry of getting up the last Number of our Magazine has, up to this day, hindered me from acknowledging the receipt of your favour of the 14th.

I have not yet seen the pamphlet you announce to me. When it appears, I certainly shall be very happy to notice the question it discusses. So far as your answer to Campbell, and the points touched upon in

* Late Editor of the London Magazine, killed in a duel.

it, are connected with the present controversy, I have no doubt you will be triumphant. With reference to your edition of Pope, I *cannot speak* at present; for I *really am not acquainted with it.* In POETICAL CRITICISM, however, you are INVULNERABLE—at least I hope so, for I think entirely with you.

"Mr. ********* shewed me many favours during my own and family's stay at Stamford, where he lives, and, therefore, I should be glad that nothing quoted from my pen should bear hard personally against him. By this time, however, the selection must be made; and I did not choose *to write to influence you before,* because I did not wish you to think that I had written to you what I *was* AFRAID *to stand by;* and also, *because,* although I do not *remember what I have written,* I do not conceive that I could have said any thing of Mr. *********, that I would be ashamed he should know I had said.

"He is an acute, accurate man, with great shrewdness of mind; but on questions of taste certainly not feeling as I do, and with a tendency, I think, to disproportionate zeal. Of course this is between ourselves, because, without violating sincerity, one may keep to oneself particulars of our estimate of an acquaintance's character.

I beg to repeat, that I shall be happy to contribute my mite towards rendering your pamphlet publicly known. I am, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

J. SCOTT.

4, *York-Street, Covent-Garden,*
30*th October,* 1820.

# APPENDIX:

CONSISTING OF

## DOCUMENTS, EXPLANATORY REMARKS,

AND

## VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

ON THE

## *Surreptitious Edition of Pope's Letters*, 1735, *and the Appended Narrative.*

I HAVE entered into a long, and I fear uninteresting, detail, in the first part of these pages, that it might be seen whether, on the strictest examination, my "assumption" respecting the publication of Pope's Letters, by *himself*, was "*groundless*," and whether the "variations" which the reader has observed, could have arisen, as Mr. Roscoe so roundly decides, "from varia-"tion in transcription!"

Respecting the singular history of "a person in the "clergyman's dress," told, as from Curll, by Dr. Johnson, which Mr. Roscoe deems so improbable, I say nothing—whether it be true or false is a matter of indifference.

But I have been charged with a most base and dishonourable act in suppressing part of "the narrative" subjoined to the surreptitious edition of 1735.

Mr. Roscoe speaks of the "severity" which I incurred in so doing, and adds that I have done worse, in "substituting" something, whatever it may be, which he tells us is taken from the Counter Narrative of Curll.

To the narrative, as re-printed in part by me, I prefixed these words, "*Some extracts from this Narrative will serve to confirm Dr. Johnson's opinion.*"

The plain fact was this: I thought the "Extracts" would be sufficient to confirm Dr. Johnson's opinion, and therefore I did not conceive it necessary to print more of this long history; but, so far from conceiving I "injured" Pope, by so doing, I did believe then, and I do most decidedly believe now, that, if the *extracts* tended to confirm Dr. Johnson's opinions, (as to the publication of the letters,) the whole Narrative would confirm it much more!!

I have already said, that what is reprinted by me in the Appendix to the seventh volume of my edition of Pope's Works, from the narrative subjoined to the edition of Pope's Letters, 1735, was cut out of the volume, and so sent to the Printer.

It is possible Mr. Roscoe may not have seen the same edition of these letters, and therefore I shall be more particular in describing the volume.

In the first page there is a print of Pope, with the subscription, "*Mr. Alexander Pope.*" No name of painter or engraver.

The next page contains the title, as follows:

"LETTERS

"OF

"Mr. *POPE*,

"AND

"Several Eminent PERSONS.

"From the Year 1705 to 1735.

"*N. B.* This EDITION contains more LETTERS, and more correctly printed, than any other extant.

"*LONDON:*

"Printed; and sold by the Booksellers of *London* and "*Westminster.* M.DCC.XXXV."

To this volume is subjoined the "Narrative," the extracts from which appear in my Appendix.

I had intended, as it has been said, to have printed the whole narrative, but afterwards thought it needless, both from its length, and from the opinion, which subsequent examination tended to confirm, that the *dark gentleman* and Pope, from their using the same expressions, were *well acquainted*, and that the whole history was *purposely* perplexed, to hide the real truth.

As to "substitution," I indignantly disclaim a thought of the kind. Whether what I printed originally belonged to Curll's Counter Narrative, or not, in the Appendix to the edition of Letters, 1735, I found it, and from thence it was faithfully printed.

All that is *recoverable* is now submitted to the reader for his decision. A portion of this narrative was adopted by Warburton; and this circumstance alone would go some way to prove the real source of the publication. This portion, consisting of the letters from Cromwell to Mrs. Thomas, appears in the authentic edition of Pope's Letters, and, therefore, need not be repeated here.

After the letter signed Henry Cromwell, in the common edition, the narrative proceeds:

*Further Extracts from the Narrative.*

"This treatment being extremely disagreeable to Mr. Pope, he was advised to *recal any letters* which might happen to be *preserved by any of his friends*, particularly those written to persons *deceased*;* which would be most subject to such an accident. Many of these were returned to him.

* The very words used by Pope himself.

"Some of his friends advised him to print a collection himself, to prevent a worse; but this he would by no means agree to. However, as some of the letters *served to revive several past scenes of friendship, and others to clear the truth of facts* in which he had been *misrepresented by the common scribblers*,* he was induced to preserve a few of his own letters, as well as of his friends. These, as I have been told, he inserted in TWO BOOKS, some originals, others copies, with a few notes and extracts here and there added. In the same books he caused to be copied some small pieces in verse and prose, either of his own, or his correspondents; which, though not finished enough for the public, were such as the partiality of any friend would be sorry to be deprived of.

"To this purpose, an amanuensis or two were employed by Mr. Pope, when the books were in the country, and by the Earl of Oxford, when they were in town.

"It happened soon after, that the Posthumous Works of Mr. Wycherley were published, in such a manner, as could no way increase the reputation of that gentleman, who had been Mr. Pope's first correspondent and friend: and several of these letters so fully shewed the state of that case, that it was thought but a justice to Mr. Wycherley's memory to print a few, to discredit that imposition. These were accordingly transcribed for the press from the *manuscript book* above-mentioned.

"They were no sooner printed, but Edmund Curll looked on these too as his property; for a copy is extant, which he corrected in order to another impression, interlined, and added marginal notes to, in his own hand.

"He then advertised a-new the Letters to Mr. Cromwell, with *additions*, and promised encouragement to all persons who should send him more.

"This is a practice frequent with booksellers, to swell an author's works, in which they have some property, with any trash that can be got from any hand; or where they have no such works, to procure some. Curll has in the same manner since advertised the Letters of Mr. Prior and Mr. Addison. A practice highly deserving some check from the Legislature, since such advertisement is really a *watch-word* to every *scoundrel* in the nation, and to

* Pope's own words.

every *domestic* of a family, to get a penny, by producing any scrap of a man's writing, (of what nature soever,) or by picking his master's pocket of letters and papers.

"A most flagrant instance of this kind was the advertisement of an intended book, called *Gulliveriana Secunda*; where it was promised, 'that *any thing* which *any body* should send as Mr. 'Pope's or Dr. Swift's should be printed and inserted *as theirs*.'

"By these honest means, Mr. Curll went on increasing his collection; and finding (as will be seen hereafter by No. 5) a further prospect of doing so, he retarded his edition of Mr. Cromwell's Letters till the 22d of March, 1734—5, and then sent Mr. Pope the following letter, the first he ever received from him.

"No. I.

"SIR,

"To convince you of my readiness to oblige you, the inclosed is a demonstration. You have, as he says, disobliged a gentleman, the initial letters of whose name are P. T. I have some other papers in the same hand relating to your *family*, which I will shew you, if you desire a sight of them. Your letters to Mr. Cromwell are out of print, and I intend to print them very beautifully in an *octavo volume*. I have more to say than is proper to write; and if you'll give me a meeting, I will wait on you with pleasure, and close all differences betwixt you and yours,

"*Rose-street*, 22 *March*, 1735. E. CURLL.

"*P. S.* I expect the civility of an answer or message."

The *inclosed* were two scraps of paper, supposed to be P. T.'s (a feigned hand), the first containing this advertisement.

"No. II.

"Letters of Alexander Pope, esq; and several eminent hands From the year 1705 to 1723. Containing a critical, philological. and historical correspondence between him and Henry Cromwell, esq; William Wycherley, esq; William Walsh, esq; William Congreve, esq; Sir William Trumbull, Sir Richard Steele, E. O——, Mr. Addison, Mr. Craggs, Mr. Gay, Dean Swift, &c. with several Letters to Ladies; to the number of two hundred. *N.B.* The

originals will be shewn at Ed. Curll's when the book is published."

The other paper was a scrap of some letter in the same hand, which exprest "a dissatisfaction at Curll for not having printed his "advertisement"—what more cannot be seen, for the rest is cut off close to the writing.

"Mr. Pope's friends imagined that the whole design of E. Curll was to get him but to look on the edition of Cromwell's Letters, and so to print it as *revised* by Mr. Pope, in the same manner as he sent an *obscene book* to a Reverend Bishop, and then advertised it as *corrected* and *revised* by him. Or if there was any such proposal from P. T., Curll would not fail to embrace it, perhaps pay for the copy with the very money he might draw from Mr. P—— to suppress it, and say P. T. had kept another copy. He therefore answered the only way he thought it safe to correspond with him, by a public advertisement in the *Daily Post-Boy*.

"No. III.

"Whereas A. P. hath received a letter from E. C. bookseller, pretending that a person, the initials of whose name are P. T. hath offered the said E. C. to print a large collection of Mr. P.'s Letters, to which E. C. requires an answer; A. P. having never had, nor intending to have, any private correspondence with the said E. C., gives it him in this manner. That he knows no such person as P. T., that he believes he hath no such collection, and that he thinks the whole a forgery, and shall not trouble himself at all about it.

"E. Curll returnedan impertinent answer in the same paper the next day, denying that he *endeavoured to correspond with Mr. P.*, and affirming that he wrote by *direction*, but declaring that he would *instantly print the said collection*. In a few days more he published the *advertisement of the book* as above, with this addition, "E. C. as before in the like case will be faithful."

He now talked of it every where, said "that P. T. was a LORD, "or a PERSON of CONSEQUENCE, who printed the books at a "*great expense*, and sought no profit, but *revenge* on Mr. Pope, "*who had offended him*:" particularly, "that some of the letters "would be such as both *Church and State would take notice of*;

"but that P. T. would by no means be known in it, that he never "would once be *seen* by him, but treated in a very *secret manner*." He told some persons that sifted him in this affair, "that he had "conversed only with his agent, a clergyman, of the name of "Smith, who came, as he said, from Southwark." With this person it was that Curll transacted the affair, who before all the letters of the book were delivered to Curll, insisted on the letters of P. T. being returned him, to secure him from all possibility of a discovery, as appears from No. 12.

"Mr. Pope, on hearing of this Smith, and finding, when the book came out, that several of the letters could only have come from the *manuscript* book before-mentioned, published this advertisement."

[Here the pages were cut out, from which the extracts in my edition were printed, to save the trouble of transcription.]

**Page 15, the Narrative proceeds:**

"I wrote to Mr. Pope, to acquaint him that I was going to print a new edition of his Letters to Mr. Cromwell, and offered him the revisal of the sheets, hoping, likewise, that it was now time to close all former resentments, which, ON HONOURABLE TERMS, I was ready to do. I told him, likewise, I had a large collection of others of his letters, which, *from your two years silence on that head, I thought was neither unjust nor dishonourable.*

"No. XII.

"I cannot send the letters* now, because I have them not all by me, but either this evening, or to-morrow, you shall not fail of them, for some of them are in a scrutore of mine out of town, and I have sent a messenger for them, who will return about three or four this afternoon. Be not uneasy, I NEVER BREAK MY WORD, and as HONOURABLE and JUST treatment shall be shewn by me, I shall expect the same return.

* "P. T.'s Letters to Curll.

"The estimate and letters you shall have together, but I desire the bearer may bring me fifty more books. Pray come to night, if you can. I am faithfully yours,

"E. CURLL.

"*For the Reverend Mr. Smith,*
*half an hour past ten.*

"Curll was now so elated with his success, the books in his hands, and, as he thought the men too, that he raised the stile of his advertisement, which he published on the 12th of May, in these words, in the *Daily Post-Boy*.

"No. XIII.

"This day are published, and most beautifully printed, price five shillings, Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence for Thirty Years, from 1704 to 1734. Being a Collection of Letters, regularly digested, written by him to the Right Honourable the late Earl of Hallifax, Earl of Burlington, Secretary Craggs, Sir William Trumbull, Honourable J. C., General ***, Honourable Robert Digby, esq; Honourable Edward Blount, esq; Mr. Addison, Mr. Congreve, Mr. Wycherley, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Steele, Mr. Gay, Mr. Jarvas, Dr. Arbuthnot, Dean Berkeley, Dean Parnelle, &c. Also, Letters from Mr. Pope to Mrs. Arabella Fermor, and many other Ladies. With the respective answers to each correspondent. Printed for E. Curll, in Rose-street, Covent-Garden, and sold by all booksellers, N. B. The Original Manuscripts (of which affidavit is made) may be seen at Mr. Curll's house by all who desire it.

"And immediately after he thus writes to Smith.

"No. XIV.

"SIR, *12th May*, 1735.

"Your letter written at two afternoon on Saturday, I did not receive till past ten at night. The title will be done to-day, and according to your promise, I fully depend on the books and MSS. to-morrow. I hope you have seen the Post-Boy, and* *approve the*

* "By this it appears, it was of Curll's own drawing up, which he deny'd to the Lords.

manner *of the advertisement.* I shall think every hour a long period of time till I have more books, and see you, being, Sir,

"Sincerely yours, E. CURLL.

"For the Reverend Mr. Smith.

"But the tables now began to turn. It happened that the Booksellers' Bill (for so it was properly called, though entitled, *An Act for the better Encouragement of Learning*) came on this day in the House of Lords. Some of their Lordships having seen an advertisement of so *strange a nature*, thought it very unfitting such a Bill should pass, without a *clause* to prevent such an enormous *license* for the future. And the Earl of I——y having read it to the House, observed further, that as it pretended to publish several letters to *Lords*, with the *respective Answers of each Correspondent*, it was a *Breach of Privilege*, and contrary to a standing Order of the House. Whereupon it was ordered, that the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod do forthwith seize the impression of the said book; and that the said E. Curll, with J. Wilford, for whom the *Daily Post-Boy* is printed, do attend the House to-morrow. And it was also ordered that the *Bill for the better Encouragement of Learning* be read a second time on this day sevennight. BY THIS INCIDENT THE BOOKSELLERS' BILL WAS THROWN OUT.

"May 13, 1735.

"The order made yesterday, upon complaint of an advertisement in the *Post-Boy*, of the publication of a book, entitled, *Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence for Thirty Years past*, being read, Mr. Wilford, the publisher, and Mr. E. Curll, were severally called in and examined, and being withdrawn,

"*Ordered*, That the matter of the said complaint be referred to "a Committee to meet to-morrow, and that E. Curll do attend the "said Committee. And that the Black Rod do attend with some "of the said books.

"*May* 14. P. T. writes to Curll, on the unexpected incident of the Lords, to instruct him in his answers to their examination, and with the utmost care to conceal himself, to this effect.

"No. XV.

"That he congratulates him on his victory over the *Lords*, the "*Pope*, and the Devil; that the Lords could not touch a hair of "his head, if he continued to behave boldly; that it would have a "better air in him to own the *printing* as well as the *publishing*, "since he was no more punishable for one than for the other; that "he should answer nothing more to their interrogatories, than that "he received the letters from *different hands*; that some of them "he *bought*, others were *given him*, and that some of the *originals* "*he had*, and the rest he *should shortly have*. P. T. *tells him fur-* "*ther*, That he shall soon take off the *mask* he complains of; that "he is not a MAN OF QUALITY (as he imagined), but *one conver-* "*sant with such*, and was concerned particularly with a noble "friend of Mr. Pope's, in preparing for the press the Letters to "Mr. Wycherley; that he caused a number over and above to be "printed, having from that time conceived the thought of pub- "lishing a volume of P.'s Letters, which he went on with, and "ordered, as nearly as possible, *to resemble that impression*. But "this was only *in ordine ad*, to another more material volume, of "his Correspondence with Bishop Atterbury, and the late Lord "Oxford and Bollingbroke. And he confesses he made some "*alterations* in *these* letters, with a *view to those*, which Mr. Curll "shall certainly have, if he behaves as he directs, and every way "conceals P. T."

"We have not this original letter, but we hope Mr. Curll will print it; if not, it can only be for this reason, that as it preceded their quarrel but one day, it proves the Letters to Bishop Atterbury, Lord Bollingbroke, &c. cannot be in Curll's hands, though he has pretended to advertise them.

"The next day Curll answers him thus.

"No. XVI.

"*Thursday 9 mané, 15th May*, 1735.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM just going again to the Lords to finish Pope. I desire you to send me the sheets to perfect the first fifty books, and like-

wise the remaining three hundred books, and pray be at the Standard Tavern this evening, and I will pay you twenty pounds more. My defence is right, I only told the Lords, I did not know from whence the books came, and that my wife received them. This was strict truth, and prevented all further enquiry. The Lords declared they had been made Pope's *tool*. I put myself upon this single point, and insisted, as there was not any Peer's Letter in the Book, I had not been guilty of any breach of privilege. Lord DELAWAR *will be in the chair by ten this morning*, and the House will be up before three.——I depend that the books and the imperfections will be sent, and believe of P. T. what I hope he believes of me.

"*For the Reverend Mr. Smith.*

"The book was this day produced; and it appearing that, contrary to the advertisement, there were no letters of Lords contained in it, and consequently not falling under the Order of the House, the books were re-delivered.

"At the same time Curll produced, and shewed to several of the Lords, the *foregoing letter* of P. T. which seems extraordinary, unless they had begun to quarrel about *profits* before that day: but after it, it is evident from the next letter, that they had an information of his willingness to betray them, and so get the whole impression to himself.

"No. XVII.

"*To the Reverend Mr. Smith.*

"*Rose-Street, past three, Friday 16th May, 1735.*

"SIR,

"1. I am falsly accused. 2. I value not any man's change of temper; I will never change my VERACITY for falshood, in owning a fact of which I am innocent. 3. I did not own the books came from *across the water*, nor ever *named you*: all I said was, that the books came *by water*. 4. When the books were seized, I sent my son to convey a letter to you; and as you told me every body knew you in Southwark, I bid him make a *strict enquiry*, as

I am sure you wou'd have done in such an exigency. 5. Sir, I HAVE ACTED JUSTLY in this affair, and that is what I shall always think wisely. 6. I will be kept no longer in the dark; P. T. is *Will o' the Wisp;* all the books I have had are imperfect; the first 50 had no titles nor prefaces, the last 5 bundles seized by the Lords contained but 38 in each bundle, which amounts to 190, and 50, is in all but 240 books. 7. As to the loss of a future copy, I despise it, nor will I be concerned with any more such dark suspicious dealers. But now, Sir, I'll tell you what I will do; when I have the books perfected which I have already received, and the rest of the impression, I will pay you for them. But what do you call this usage? First take a note for a month, and then want it to be changed for one of Sir Richard Hoare's—my note is as good, for any sum I give it, as the BANK, and shall be as punctually paid. I always say, *gold is better than paper*, and 2*o*/. I will pay, if the books are perfected to-morrow morning, and the rest sent, or to-night is the same thing to me. But if this dark converse goes on, I will instantly *reprint the whole book*, and, as a supplement to it, *all the letters* P. T. *ever sent me*, of which I have *exact copies;* together with *all your originals*, and give them in upon oath to my Lord Chancellor. You talk of *trust;* P. T. has not reposed any in me, for he has my money and notes for imperfect books. Let me see, Sir, either P. T. or yourself, or you will find the Scots proverb verified,

"*Nemo me impune lacesset.*

"Your abused humble servant,

"E. CURLL.

"*P. S.* Lord ——— I attend this day. LORD DELAWAR I SUP WITH TO-NIGHT. Where Pope has one Lord, I have twenty."

"Mr. Curll, just after, in the *London Post*, or *Daily Advertiser*, printed this advertisement.

"No. XVIII.

"Mr. Pope's Literary Correspondence, &c. with a Supplement of the *Initial Correspondence* of P. T. E. P. R S. &c.

"To which in two days more his Correspondents returned the following.

"No. XIX.

"To manifest to the world the insolence of E. Curll, we hereby declare, that neither P. T. much less R. S. his agent, ever did give, or could pretend to give, any title whatever in Mr. Pope's Letters to the said E. Curll, and he is hereby challenged to produce any pretence to the copy whatsoever. We helped the said E. Curll to the Letters, and joined with him, on condition he should pay a certain sum for the books *as he sold them*; accordingly the said E. Curll received 250 books, which he sold (perfect and imperfect) at 5s. each, and for all which he never paid more than 10 guineas, and gave *notes* for the rest, which proved *not negotionable*. Besides which, P. T. was persuaded by R. S. at the instigation of E. Curll, to pay the expense of the whole impression, viz. 75*l*. no part whereof was repaid by the said *Curll*. Therefore every bookseller will be indemnified every way from any possible prosecution or molestation of the said E. Curll; and whereas the said E. Curll threatens to publish our correspondence, and as much as in him lies to *betray his benefactors*, we shall also publish *his Letters to us*, which will open a scene of baseness and foul dealing that will sufficiently shew to mankind his character and conduct.

"*May* 23*d*, 1735. P. T. R. S.

"The effect of this quarrel has been the putting into our hands all the Correspondence above; which having given the reader, to make what reflections he pleases on, we have nothing to add but our hearty wishes, [in which we doubt not every honest man will concur,] that the next *sessions*, when the BOOKSELLERS' BILL shall be again brought in, the Legislature will be pleased not to *extend* the *privileges*, without at the same time *restraining the license, of booksellers*. Since, in a case so *notorious* as the printing a gentleman's PRIVATE LETTERS, most eminent, both *printers* and *booksellers*, conspired to assist the pyracy both in printing and in vending the same.

"P. S. WE ARE INFORMED, *that notwithstanding the pretences of* Edmund Curll, *the Original Letters of Mr. Pope, with the* POST-MARKS UPON THEM,* *remain still in the books from whence they were copied, and that so many omissions and interpolations have been made in this publication, as to render it* IMPOSSIBLE *for Mr. P. to* OWN THEM IN THE CONDITION THEY APPEAR.

"FINIS."

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The final advertisement is a mere "*announcement*" of that intended publication of Pope's Correspondence, which appeared two years afterwards under his own sanction. What "severity of animadversion" I may deserve for not having printed the whole narrative in my edition, will be now obvious; but I rather conceive the severity of animadversion will be thought not so much deserved by me, as by those who could deliberately make such a charge; and I cheerfully leave the document, and what I have said on it, as well as the preceding observations and arguments, to that decision.

* The POST-MARKS upon them! So, then, after all, they were to be considered as printed from the original letters received by the post, if this account is to be credited!

Of the compounded and remanufactured letter, as published in the spurious edition and Pope's own, I have already spoken; but the reader cannot understand what was said so well as by comparing himself the two letters. That which follows is the original letter, as sent to Martha Blount, with the conclusion (in *italics*,) which in Pope's and the surreptitious edition of 1735 is added to a different letter.—(*Bowles's Edition, vol.* x. *letter* 14, *page* 43.)

"MADAM, *Bath, Oct. 6th.*

"If I may ever be allowed to tell you the thoughts I have so often of you in your absence, it is at this time, when I neglect the company of a great number of ladies, to write this letter. From the window where I am seated I command the prospect of twenty or thirty, in one of the finest promenades in the world, every moment that I take my eye off from the paper. If variety of diversion and new objects be capable of driving our friends out of our minds, I have the best excuse imaginable for forgetting you: for I have slid, I can't tell how, into all the amusements of this place: my whole day is shared by the pump-assemblies, the walks, the chocolate-houses, raffling-shops, plays, medleys, &c. We have no ladies who have the face, though some of them may have the impudence, to expect a lampoon. The prettiest is one I had the luck to travel with, who has found out so far as to tell me, that whatever pretences I make to gaiety, my heart is not at Bath. Mrs. Gage came hither the other day, and did me a double honour, in speaking to me, and asking publicly when I saw you last? I endeavour (like all awkward fellows) to become agreeable by imitation; and observing who are most in favour with the fair, I sometimes copy the civil air of Gascoin, sometimes the impudent one of Nash, and sometimes, for vanity, a silly one of a neighbour of yours, who has lost to the gamesters here that money, of which

the ladies only deserve to rob a man of his age. This mistaken youth is so ignorant as to imagine himself as agreeable in the eyes of the sex to-day, as he was yesterday, when he was worth three or four hundred pounds more. Alas! he knows not, that just as much is left of a mistress's heart, as is emptied from one's own pocket! My chief acquaintance of my own sex are the aforesaid Mr. Gascoin and Mr. Nash; of the other, Dame Lindsey and Jenny Man. I am so much a rake as to be ashamed of being seen with Dr. Parnelle. I ask people abroad, who that parson is? We expect better company here next week; and then a certain Earl* shall know what ladies drink his health every day since his disgrace, that you may be in the public pamphlets, as well as your humble servant. They say here are cabals held, under the pretence of drinking waters; and this scandal, like others, refreshes me, and elevates my spirits. I think no man deserves a monument that could not be wrapped in a winding-sheet of papers writ against him. If women could digest scandal as well as I, there are two that might be the happiest creatures in the universe. I have in ne week run through whatever they call diverting here; and I should be ashamed to pass two just in the same track. I will therefore take but a trip to Longleat, which is twelve miles hence, to visit my Lord Lansdowne, and return to London.

"*I must tell you a truth, which is not, however, much to my credit. I never thought so much of yourself and your fair sister as since I have been fourscore miles distant from you. At Binfield I look upon you as good neighbours, at London as pretty kind of women, and here as Divinities, Angels, Goddesses, or what you will. In like manner, I never knew at what a rate I valued your life, till you were upon the point of dying. If Mrs. Teresa and you will but fall sick every season, I shall certainly die for you. Seriously, I value you both so much, that I esteem others much the less for your sakes: you have robbed me of the pleasure of esteeming a thousand fine qualities in them, by shewing me so many* IN A SUPERIOR DEGREE *in yourselves. There are but two things in the world which can make you indifferent to me, which I believe you are not capable of; I mean,*

* "Lord Oxford, probably; which marks the time when the letter was written.

*ill-nature and malice. I have seen enough of you not to resent any frailty you could have, and nothing less than a vice can make me like you less. I expect you should discover, by my common conduct towards you both, that this is true; and that, therefore, you should pardon a thousand things in me for that disposition. Expect nothing from me but truth and freedom, and I shall be always thought by you, what I always am,*

*"Your faithful, obliged humble servant."*

Now let us turn to that letter, containing this conclusion (in *italics*) as it stands in the *surreptitious edition* and *Pope's own*, in order to observe those trifling "variations in *transcription*," of which Mr. Roscoe speaks.

***Letter VI. surreptitious edition; Letter VIII. Pope's own.***

"If you ask how the waters agree with me, I must tell you, so very well, that I question how you and I should agree if we were in a room by ourselves. Mrs. ——— has honestly assured me, that but for some whims which she can't entirely conquer, she would go and see the world with me in man's cloaths. Even you, Madam, I fancy (if you would not partake in our adventures), would wait our coming in at the evening with some impatience, and be well enough pleased to hear them by the fire-side. That would be better than reading romances, unless Lady M. would be our historian. What raises these desires in me, is an acquaintance I am beginning with my Lady Sandwich, who has all the spirit of the last age, and all the gay experience of a pleasurable life. It were as scandalous an omission to come to the Bath, and not see my Lady Sandwich, as it had formerly been to have travelled to Rome without visiting the Queen of Sweden. She is, in a word, the best thing this country has to boast of; and has she has been all that a woman of spirit could be, so she still continues that easy and independent creature that a sensible woman always will be.

*"I must tell you the truth, which is not, however, much to my credit. I never thought so much of yourself and your sister, as since I have been fourscore miles distant from you. In the Forest I looked upon you as good neighbours, at London as pretty kind of women, but here as divinities, angels, goddesses, or what you will. In the same manner I never knew at what rate I valued your life till you were upon the point of dying. If Mr. ——— and you will but fall very sick every season, I shall certainly die for you. Seriously, I value you both so much, that I esteem others much the less for your sakes; you have robbed me of the pleasure of esteeming a thousand pretty qualities in them, by shewing me so many finer in yourselves. There are but two things in the world which could make you indifferent to me, which, I believe, you are not capable of, I mean ill-nature and malice. I have seen enough of you, not to overlook any frailty you could have, and nothing less than a vice could make me like you less I expect you should discover by my conduct towards you both, that this is true, and that therefore you should pardon a thousand things in me for that one disposition. Expect nothing from me but truth and freedom, and I shall always be thought by you, what I always am,*

*"Your, etc."*

*The Reader's attention is requested to the following*

## EXPLANATORY REMARKS.

Page 8, line 24, for "I am going to write," read "I "am beginning," &c.

Page 10, line 24, for "justify," read "justifies."

Page 35, lines 8 and 25, for "letter 9th," read *passim* "letter 6th."

Where I speak of Pope's connection with Curll, page 40, the reader might naturally exclaim, "*Serpentes* "*avibus!*" But it will appear from the context, that Pope, being secretly connected with the stratagem by which it was contrived that the letters should be published by Curll, might have been so far in connection with Curll, though unknown to the latter, who was made the *dupe*, and after *satirised* for it!

Where it is said (page 41) that Pope must have written the preface, "complaining of letters being "stolen, *before they were stolen*," it must be recollected, that the letters furnished by Mrs. Thomas were not *stolen*, but *given*.

For "which Rochester only could use," page 48, read, "which, *we might imagine*, Rochester only could "use."

Instead of Wife of Bath, page 49, I should have said, "Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale."

See Dryden's opinion in that most delightful Essay prefatory to his Fables.

Page 52, line 7, for "only," read "most decided "quarrel-maker."

"Call her Angel, Goddess,—MONTAGUE?"

In the original the initial M—— only stands; but we can think of no other name that will answer to the verse and the rhyme; yet Pope speaks with contempt of Lady Mary in the beginning of this Imitation. My opinion is, that the poem was written by Pope, when the lady named was the object of his passion; but that he did notpublish it till, I believe, the year 1732, when he might have added a new beginning, retaining the old couplet.

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In pointing out to the reader the above unintentional mistakes and inadvertent errors as they have occurred to me, I am anxious, at the same time, to obviate certain objections, which, on reading over the foregoing pages, have presented themselves to my mind.

### *Martha Blount.*

When Mr. Roscoe brings the testimony of many honourable characters to prove the estimation in which the character of Martha Blount was held, I must beg the reader to look back, and see the extent of my im-

putation. I have made no inquisition into private life. I have simply said, (taking into consideration the language that was used on one side, and suffered on the other,) that "WE COULD not *implicitly* believe that the connec- "tion was so *pure* and *innocent* as Pope's professed "panegyrist would make us believe!" The criminality (into which I did not enter) is merely hypothetical; but that the connection was not so "*pure*" as Ruffhead would make us *believe*, must be, I think, by every man of sense, admitted, who confines his observations to the published specimens of Pope's grossness, and his licentious language to the lady herself. And I think we may say this, making every allowance for the indelicacy of that period, in comparison of the more refined manners of the present age. Swift was *filthy* often, disgustingly *filthy*; but how chaste and even affecting are all his verses to Stella; whereas Pope insulted with obscenity the very woman to whom he was certainly attached, and whom he professed to honour.

I say nothing of the circumstances, that by many she was considered to have been *privately* married; that the language of others, as respectable as any in Mr. Roscoe's list, was, that, if she was not, she *ought* to have been! that by some she was called Pope's mistress expressly; I have said nothing of these things. What is it to me, whether their connection was absolutely criminal or not? But in writing a life, public morals and public duty were much to me, and ought to be to every one.

Swift never employed his talents to recommend *stews and brothels*, as Pope did in that Imitation of Horace, of which I did not speak in my edition, but am *forced* to do so now! Swift never advocated open prostitution and debauchery, and lauded receptacles of infamy!

Rochester did not write obscenely, and describe vice, and at the same time ostentatiously lay claim to the most exalted virtue. Pope did this, and it cannot be denied; and he that, for the sake of affected candour to the dead, shuts his eyes to such palpably offensive conduct, is a traitor to public virtue and truth. These are my sentiments, without going beyond the public record, or making any pretensions to affected purity. Pope and Martha, in the opinion of Ruffhead, seemed to have been another Cowper and Mrs. Unwin!

"If," says Mr. Roscoe, "the connection was not "'pure and innocent,' it was DISGRACEFUL and "GUILTY!!"

With great deference to Mr. Roscoe's superior knowledge of human nature, I think there may be great shades between comparative "purity and innocence;" I say, a mind that could offer or receive such indecencies as I have spoken of, could not be "pure and innocent," though the persons might not be guilty of any particular criminality. Of that I neither affirmed one thing or the other; for I considered that any mind contaminated by impure associations could not be as "innocent or "pure" as Ruff head seemed to imagine; and I affirm, that what I said of the lovers being past the "hey-day" of youth ought to be construed against my entertaining any ideas of specific criminality: I only spake of what concerned public morals, without searching into *private* scandal. My words are, "Whatever immorality there might be in the connection, it" (*i. e.* the connection, the domestic cohabitation) "did not take place till"—This sentence may have been understood as having reference to criminality; but to shew that it was impossible that such could be my meaning, I specified the

year in which M. B. came to reside with Pope, and their ages. It is, I repeat, impossible I could have thought of affixing a *precise period* to their actual "criminality."

It has also been said, that I unfeelingly "exulted" over Pope's personal infirmities; when I have merely mentioned them (and I confidently appeal to my words) as among those causes to which a charitable mind would attribute the defects of his disposition.

I have done Mr. Roscoe one piece of injustice, and I hasten to acknowledge it, as I should, if upon reading over attentively what has been written, I had discovered any other. Mr. Roscoe does not say, *totidem verbis*, that Pope, in description of allegorical personages, (the Sylphs, I suppose,) is equal* to Shakespeare and Spenser; but equal to those, who, *like* Shakespeare and Spenser, have given to "airy beings "a local habitation and a name." The delightful machinery which Pope has so admirably, so poetically, and so exquisitely interwoven with the mock-heroic, none more admires than myself; but I notwithstanding assert that Pope, as a poet, is *like* NO POET who is *like* SHAKESPEARE; for where is one *like him* to be found?

Mr. Roscoe might think SHAKESPEARES "as "plenty as blackberries;" and if "*quotation*" and "*adaptation to various purposes*" were criteria of the highest poetry, Pope might be "*like*" *those* who were "*like*" *Shakespeare!* but such a POET, I believe

*A similar inadvertence appears in the Table of Contents.

I may say, is "*sui generis*" in the world. None ever was "like" him; none is "like" him; and I have little fear in adding,

"Take him, for all in all,
"We ne'er shall look upon his '*like*' again."

Shakespeare's "airy beings" had their "local habi-"tations," by moonlight, in wild forests or inchanted islands, or "play'd in the plighted clouds;" and if any genius can make "a *candle* as poetical as a *comet*," Pope's Sylphs may be thought as poetical as Shakespeare's Fairies, the one having an habitation, and singing

"Where the bee sucks,"

and the other guarding—a *silk petticoat!*

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It might save me, perhaps, some future trouble, if I here briefly explain myself on *three points:*

*First,* I have placed Pope next to Milton, because I conceived the *first* poet, though of the second class, ought to rank before the *second* of the *first* class; and therefore having classed Pope before Dryden, he must take his place before all other English poets, except Milton, according to Dr. Johnson's Catalogue, in which Shakespeare and Spenser are not included.

*Second,* It is no critical criterion to say of any poem that it is *moral, didactic,* or *satirical:* as its excellence, under these characters, will depend upon its *execution,* in which Pope never had a superior: but it *is* a critical criterion to say, a poem is pathetic or sublime; for it cannot be so pronounced, unless the *execution* be taken into consideration as well as the subject.

*Third,* When I say Pope's Ode to St. Cecilia is a failure, I mean, that as a lyric poem, compared with the first of the kind in the English language—that of Dryden, or that of Gray—it is inferior; whereas, all the other poems of Pope, except his Pastorals and Windsor Forest, are the *first* and *most perfect* of their kind.

From these opinions I have never varied—they will be found, *passim,* in my edition. I am sorry that Mr.

Roscoe seems to have paid more attention to what has been written *against me*, than to what I have said in vindication of myself; and if I could complain of any thing, it is not of being *misrepresented*, but of not being HEARD.

## VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

WHEN it has been said, that the same expressions were used by Pope and the author of the surreptitious edition, it may be asked, was Pope a BLOCKHEAD? could he be such a blockhead, as to employ in his own preface the very *expressions* used in the publication of which he complained? I answer, that with all his genius, he might have been as inadvertent as some greater *blockheads*, and particularly the writer of these pages. But, with all my *inadvertencies*, of which none is more conscious, I have defended myself, almost *single-handed*, against some of the *cleverest* men, (among whom I include my present opponent, excepting always his ideas of poetry and criticism,) some of the greatest blackguards, and some of the greatest *blockheads*, of the age.

In my Letter to Lord Byron I remarked, that "Midas, Punch, and Apollo, against one poor PARSON, were fearful odds!" but the whole periodical press has been against me, with the exception of one of the most powerful in its line—Blackwood—another popular writer, who maintained his opinion with equal disinterestedness and force; and two defenders, in articles, which my coarsest opponent (of whom I say no

more, as he is in his grave) unequivocally declared were written by MYSELF! When I say that the periodical press—Newspapers, Magazines, Reviews—have been against me, I might also add some even of the illustrious "Marchands of the Muses"—Booksellers!

I have lately seen, by accident, some articles which seem to manifest a fairer disposition and more dispassionate judgment; but whether I am supported or vilified, satisfied that my cause is good, (however it may have been defended,) I now cheerfully bid POETS, CRITICS, REVIEWERS, MEN OF GENIUS, men of erudition and virtue, (to whom, as the good Archbishop did to Gil Blas, I wish all happiness, with a little more *taste!*)—*booksellers*, and *blockheads*,—VALETE!

*Bremhill Parsonage, Jan. 10th*, 1825.

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